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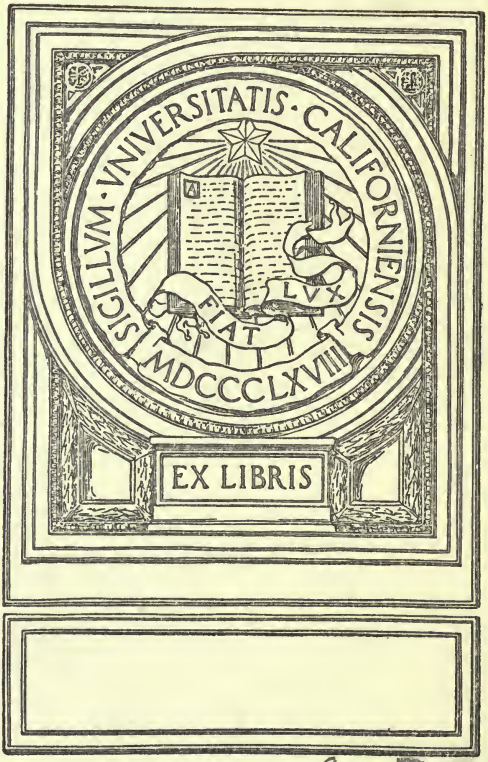

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# THE WIDOW MARRIED.

## CHAPTER I.

AN INCOMPLETE NARRATIVE RESUMED—AN UNEXPECTED BLESSING—PREPARATIONS FOR HAPPINESS—THE PHILOSOPHY OF RESEMBLANCE.

All persons tolerably well read in biography are aware that the amiable Mrs. Barnaby, *ci-devant*, Miss Martha Compton, of Silverton, after having lost her second husband, the Reverend Mr. O'Donagough, from the effects of an unfortunate accident, which occurred to him near Sydney, in New South Wales, bestowed her still extremely fair hand on her former friend and favourite, Major Allen. But the events which followed these third espousals, though unquestionably of as much general

interest as any which preceded them, have never yet been given to the public with that careful attention to the truth of history which they deserve; and it is to remedy this obvious defect in English literature, that the present narrative has been composed.

The existence of Mrs. Barnaby, (this name is once more used as the one by which our heroine has hitherto been best known,) the existence of Mrs. Barnaby, up to the hour in which she pledged her vows to Major Allen, before the altar of the principal church in Sydney, had, on the whole, been a very happy one. She had, in fact, very keenly enjoyed many things, which persons less fortunately constituted, might have considered as misfortunes; and to the amiable and well-disposed reader a continuation of the history of such a mind can hardly fail of being useful as an encouragement and example.

Mrs. O'Donagough, on the day she married Major Allen, was exactly thirty-eight years of age, at least she only wanted two days of it; and it is possible that her wish to enhance the

festivity of every scene in which she was engaged, might have led her to name her birthday as that on which her third wedding should take place, had it not been that a sort of dislike which she had taken, while still Martha Compton, of Silverton, to the unnecessary dragging forth the date of the day and hour at which people were born, still continued. She, therefore, said nothing at all about her birthday, but prepared for the solemn ceremony with as much tender emotion, and as delicate a bloom, as when she first pledged her virgin troth to Mr. Barnaby.

Born under a happy star, a pleasure yet awaited Mrs. Major Allen, the want of which she had often lamented, and of which her hopes had long since withered and faded, till at length they assumed the worn-out aspect of despair. But in due time, after her third marriage, Mrs. Allen communicated to the Major the delightful intelligence that he was likely to become a father.

Major Allen behaved exceedingly well on the occasion; professing his entire satisfaction

at the news, and adding with newly-awakened paternal forethought, "If that is the case, Mrs. Allen, we must mind our hits as to money matters, and take care that our little evening card-parties answer."

To this Mrs. Major Allen had not the slightest objection; but how powerful is maternal feeling in a woman's heart! Though she failed not to render her little Sydney *soirées* as attractive as ever, though she walked about the room, and behind the card-players as usual, never forgetting a single instruction given to her by her ingenious husband—notwithstanding she did all this, her heart was almost wholly in her work-basket!

It was really beautiful to watch the development of a mother's feelings in a heart which had never yet been awakened to them! For instance, Mrs. Major Allen had never shown herself, in any country, particularly fond of poor people; but now she never saw a woman in her own interesting situation, without feeling her heart, or, at any rate, her attention drawn towards her; and many a question did

she ask, and many a copper coin did she bestow, in consequence of this most amiable species of solicitude.

During the first months of her residence at Sydney, she had not, perhaps, chosen her intimates among the most domestic ladies; but now the case was entirely altered. There was an excellent woman, a Mrs. Sheepshanks, the wife of an attorney, enjoying great business in the town, who had more little children than any other lady in it, and with her, Mrs. Major Allen now sought to form an intimacy of the most familiar kind. She delighted in nothing so much as stepping in to call upon her as soon as breakfast was over, and entering with her, even while her nursery avocations rendered everything like regular conversation impossible, into a sort of zigzag intercourse, between saying and doing, that to any one less delightfully alive to the innocent attractions of little children, must have appeared exceedingly tiresome.

Mrs. Sheepshanks, poor woman! like all the other ladies in the settlement, found it very

difficult, not to say impossible, to keep any decent servant in her family; the few young women who deserved the epithet, getting married themselves with such certain rapidity, as to give every reason to suppose that Mr. Hood's interesting anecdote of an offer of marriage being made through a speaking-trumpet, to a vessel approaching the coast with young ladies aboard, must have been founded strictly on fact.

At the time Mrs. Sheepshanks and her little family took such hold on the affections of Mrs. Major Allen, the only attendant the attorney's lady had to assist her in the labours of the nursery, was a girl of seventeen, whose domestic education not having been particularly attended to, left her with rather less knowledge of her duties in such a situation, than might have been wished.

The confusion, therefore, which sometimes ensued in this department of the household, was considerable; but Mrs. Major Allen bore it all; nay, she rejoiced at the excellent opportunities this afforded of obtaining information

concerning many infantine facts, of which she had hitherto lived in total ignorance.

Mrs. Sheepshanks, who, though sometimes a little fretful, was in the main a good-natured woman, always received these visits very kindly; and, indeed, her respect for Mrs. Allen was so great, that she considered them as an honour. For Mrs. Allen had, with friendly confidence, mentioned to her how near she had been to marrying a lord, of which, indeed, her beautiful shell necklace gave the most convincing proof; and she also explained to her the very foolish bit of fun formerly recorded about the old clothes, by which she offended her wealthy aunt, and so lost the chance, or rather the certainty, of becoming her heiress. These, and many other anecdotes of her former life, she had recorded in a manner which left no doubt on the mind of Mrs. Sheepshanks respecting the distinguished rank of the society in which she had mingled in the mother country.

"Dear me, Mrs. Major Allen! only to think of your doing all that with your own

hands!" exclaimed this kind-hearted mother of many colonists; "I am sure if it was not for the interest which I know you take in all these little matters just at present, I should be actually fit to die, to see you do such things!"

"Never you mind, Mrs. Sheepshanks," returned the major's lady, "I can't tell you how it all interests me! Pretty little darling! it shall do everything it likes, that it shall. Laugh a little bit then—that's it—laugh again, baby—laugh, laugh, laugh, kiss, kiss, kiss, tickle, tickle, tickle. Bless its sweet heart! I am sure it knows me!" And again Mrs. Major Allen applied the pap-boat to the last born Sheepshanks's mouth, though the overfed and intelligent infant immediately returned the superfluity without ceremony.

"How do you think I hold a baby, my dear?" demanded the anxious aspirant to maternal dignity.

"Oh, very well!—very well indeed, considering—only you must mind about the pins. Little Van Dieman is pursing up his mouth

now, very much as if he were going to have a cry—and he mostly cries when he gets a pin into him," observed Mrs. Sheepshanks.

Little Van Dieman here gave the most unimpeachable testimony in favour of his mama's sagacity, for they *had* a cry, and such a long and lusty one, as might have daunted any novice of less firm spirit than Mrs. Major Allen. She, however, hugged the little screamer tightly to her bosom, and though it did not seem at all to comfort him, held him there very close indeed for many minutes, swaying her person backwards and forwards incessantly; while one widely-extended hand pressed firmly upon the upper joint of the vertebræ, and the other upon the lower part of the infant's person, kept it in a position as likely as anything, short of suffocation, to still the sound.

"It is no good, my dear Mrs. Allen," said the mother, "He'll go on that way till he's undressed again, I'll bet anything—just stop till I have finished combing these two, and I'll look him over myself."

"Oh, *do* let me undress him from top to

toe," cried Mrs. Allen, eagerly, "I have never done that my own self yet, and I cannot tell you how I long for it—will you let me try, Mrs. Sheepshanks?"

"Yes, sure, if you like it—stand still, Eliza, can't you!—I am only afraid you'll find it a great plague, and him screaming so."

"Why, I should like it better if he didn't, to be sure, because it frightens me, and in my situation, that is not exactly the thing. However, it is quite needful I should get my hand in; not but what I shall make the major give the highest of wages; and that, you know, if any thing can, will get me a nurse; so that I shan't have more to do than what my maternal feeling naturally leads to. But, nevertheless, it is quite right and proper that I should know all about it myself—there's a darling now;" continued the fond mother-expectant, addressing the still screaming baby. "There's a love—just let me untie these strings, only these strings, my beautiful darling! There, there, there—now *donty wonty!*" These last words being uttered in the coaxing idiom of her

native country, attracted the attention of the nursery-maid of all work, who at that moment entered the room. This girl having some years before accompanied her mother in her voyage from London, under circumstances, that by skilful managemeut, had rendered the excursion, young as she was, equally necessary for both, was apt to boast of her metropolitan education, and particularly prided herself on her "parts of speech."

"Vell now, vat does *donty vonty* mean, I should like to know? You'd better give over the child to me, ma'am—I knows his vays, and he knows my vords."

The style in which this dainty damsel, who was frightfully marked by the smallpox, approached, was not conciliatory, for her red arms were stuck akimbo, and her nose, always of the *retroussé* order, turned up in very evident contempt.

"Mind your manners, Phebe!" cried her mistress, but Phebe strode on towards the low rocking-chair on which Mrs. Major Allen was seated, and placing herself before her as close

as it was possible to stand, while a pair of squinting eyes, that were intended to look boldly at her, seemed wandering, heaven knows where, repeated in no very silvery tones—"You'd better give over the child to me."

Upon every former occasion when Mrs. Major Allen had mixed herself up with the nursery arrangements of her friend, the scene of action, however active and interesting the business going on, had always been the parlour. But this happened to be washing-day, and the absence of Phebe being absolutely certain till dinner-time, Mrs. Sheepshanks gave herself up altogether, as she said, to supply her place, and nothing less than the pertinacity of Mrs. Allen, could have obtained an entrance into the house. Once pursued, however, into that receptacle of all litter, her nursery, the poor lady was perhaps not sorry to have some one as willing as Mrs. Allen to nurse a baby—for she had made up her mind that day to have a general review of all her children's heads; and accordingly the Major's lady was put in possession of the nursing chair, and permitted, as we

have seen, to revel in the delight of handling a baby to her heart's content.

So earnestly was she engaged in unravelling the manifold mysteries of baby buttons and strings, that, notwithstanding Phebe's abrupt address, Mrs. Allen did not raise her eyes towards the girl, till she thus stood close before her face; and when at last she did so, she pushed the chair violently back, very nearly let little Van Dieman fall out of her arms, and uttered, "Oh! good gracious me!" in a voice that almost amounted to a scream.

"Lord have mercy! what's the matter, Mrs. Allen?" cried Mrs. Sheepshanks, pushing aside the head upon which she was operating, "Van isn't taken with a fit, is he?"

By this time the agitated Mrs. Major Allen had risen from the nursing-chair, and having hastily laid the baby in the cradle beside it, she approached her friend with strong sypmtoms of agitation.

"For Heaven's sake come into the parlour with me for one moment, my dear Mrs. Sheepshanks!" she said. "I will not detain

you more than a moment. I am going home directly, but indeed, indeed, I must speak to you first."

"Dear me! I dont know what to do, I'm sure, with the butter and beer, and all lying about in this way. Would'nt it do Mrs. Allen if I was to come in and hear what you want to say after dinner?"

"Good Heaven, no! you have no idea of the state of mind I am in! Indeed, you must let me speak to you directly."

Thus urged, poor Mrs. Sheepshanks, though looking exceedingly distressed, resigned her sponge and her combs, placed everything upon the chimney-piece, as much out of reach as she could—wiped her hands upon her linen apron, before she took it off, and then followed her terrified-looking guest to the parlour.

"Oh, my dear friend! tell me your opinion honestly and truly—I conjure you not to deceive me! You have had great experience—you *must* be able to form a judgment. Do you think there is any danger of my child's being like that dreadful girl?"

"What girl, ma'am? What is it you mean, Mrs. Allen?" said Mrs. Sheepshanks, looking a little cross, and as if she did not as yet perceive any good and sufficient reason for her having been forced to abandon her important avocations in the nursery.

"What girl?—oh!" with a violent shudder, "that frightful, frightful girl that you call Phebe. For Heaven's sake, Mrs. Sheepshanks, don't be out of temper. Don't be angry with me, but consider my situation! Though I have been a married woman, as you know, for some years, this is the first time——. In short, you know what my condition is, and now I implore you to tell me if you think there is any danger, nervous and delicate as I am, that my looking up so very suddenly close under that horrid girl's face, is likely to mark the child."

"What, with the smallpox, Mrs. Allen?" said Mrs. Sheepshanks, with great simplicity.

"I don't know. Mercy on me! how should I know? Smallpox, squinting, that dreadful nose too! Oh, Mrs. Sheepshanks, Mrs. Sheep-

shanks! all the happiness, all the delight I have promised myself, will be lost and destroyed for ever, if my child is born in any way like that horrid girl!"

Here Mrs. Major Allen burst into a very passionate flood of tears, and wrung her hands so piteously, as she fixed her streaming eyes upon her neighbour's face, that the good lady, though thinking her cause of grief rather visionary, could not refuse her sympathy, and answered very kindly, "No indeed, Mrs. Allen, I don't think you have got the least bit of reason to fear any such thing. It is much more likely, depend upon it, that your dear babe should resemble its good-looking papa, or your own self, Mrs. Allen, who have got such good striking features, than a girl that you never happened to look at but once."

"That's it, Mrs. Sheepshanks—that's just the most shocking and provoking part of it. If I did not know that the Major had always been considered as exceedingly handsome, and myself too—I won't deny it, for why should I?—I was always counted something out of the

common way, in that respect, and if I did not know all this as well as I do, I should not mind the thing half so much."

"But why *should* your child be like Phebe Perkins, Mrs. Allen? The girl is no beauty, to be sure, I'm not going to say she is; but yet I can't understand why her ugliness should put you into such a way as this," replied Mrs. Sheepshanks, with some little severity of emphasis.

"For mercy's sake don't be angry with me my dear, dear friend. For mercy's sake don't reproach me! Something very unfortunate will happen, I'm quite sure, if you do. You can't think, I am certain you can't, how I feel. 'Twas the suddenness, Mrs. Sheepshanks, the shocking suddenness, with which I looked up, that made the danger, as I take it. Tell me, for pity's sake, without being hasty with me, did any such thing ever happen to you?"

"What thing, Mrs. Allen? The seeing Phebe?"

"No, no, that I suppose you got accustomed to a little at a time, as I may say, and by degrees.

So unlike poor unlucky me! But what I mean is, if any of your children were ever marked in any way?"

"Dear me, no, Mrs. Allen," replied this fond mother of many children, with a very natural air of displeasure, "can't you see that they are not?"

"Oh yes, to be sure—not in sight, not in sight, certainly," sobbed out the still agitated lady.

"Nor out of sight either, I assure you, ma'am."

"Oh my dear, what a happy, happy, woman you are! and so many of them like you too!" rejoined Mrs. Allen, in so very flattering and conciliatory a tone, that her friend's little feeling of displeasure vanished at once, and cordially seizing her hand, she said,

"Don't you worry yourself about any such nonsense, my dear Mrs. Allen. You go home, and look in the glass, and there it is that you'll see what your dear baby will be most like."

There was something in this assurance so calculated to touch the heart of Mrs. Major

Allen, that she could not resist it. With an emotion over which she really seemed to have no control, she threw her arms round the neck of the kind prophetess, and bestowed upon her a very fervant kiss.

"Heaven grant that your words may come true, my dear, dear, Mrs. Sheepshanks!" she exclaimed, with her eyes once more flashing through her tears. "I do declare, that if I could have a girl exactly like what I was when Captain Tate first came to Silverton, I should be the very happiest woman in the world!"

"Well then, I'm sure I hope you will. But I suppose you'd like it to be a little like the Major too?" said Mrs. Sheepshanks playfully.

"Oh! about that I don't know, my dear. If you could know what I was at the time I talk about, I don't think you'd advise any alteration—unless it was to be a boy, indeed."

"And then I suppose you would be better pleased still. Most ladies like to have a boy first."

"But I don't though," replied Mrs. Major Allen, rather sharply. "That's all very well

for people who are never celebrated for having anything particular about them. But where there *is* beauty and great family beauty particularly, it is certainly most desirable to have a girl, because it's likely to answer best."

"Well then," returned Mrs. Sheepshanks, rising hastily, for she heard sounds alarmingly indicative of a general nursery riot,—"well then, dear Mrs. Allen, go home, sit down before your looking-glass, and take my word for it, there is a deal better chance that your child will be like what you see there, than to poor pock-fretten Phebe. Good bye, good bye."

Mrs. Major Allen delayed not a moment longer, but took leave as brisklyas Mrs. Sheepshanks herself could desire. There was certainly something like superstitious respect in the reverence with which Mrs. Major Allen listened to every word *à propos* of maternity which fell from the lips of this lady. Looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, and terribly afraid that some acquaintance might stop her ere she reached her home, Mrs. Allen

hurried forward, with as rapid a step as she considered prudent under existing circumstances, and the moment her door was opened to her, hastened up stairs without pausing to make any of the little domestic inquiries which usually followed her return.

For a moment she sat down to recover breath, and then slowly and carefully, and without too much exertion, permitted herself to draw the table, which served her for a toilet, into what she considered to be the most advantageous light. Not the strongest, perhaps, but that which by former experiments she knew would show the most favourably to her own eyes, that large portion of her charms still left unscathed by time.

Having hazarded this active, but necessary exercise, Mrs. Allen placed herself in a soft and ample chair, and sat for some minutes of complete and soothing repose, with her mirror at the right angle, and her own still bright eyes very fondly fixed upon it. The motive for the occupation in which she was employed, perhaps, gave an additional charm to her expres-

sion, and she thought she was almost as handsome as ever.

There was, however, none of that dangerous confidence of self-conceit in Mrs. Allen, which leads some people to fancy that they are quite handsome enough, and need no improvement. On the contrary, in her very best days she had never encouraged the belief that her beauty, remarkable as it was, required no assistance from human ingenuity and skill. She knew the contrary, and even now, alone as she was, and under the influence only of motives the most pure and sublime that can elevate the heart (or the art) of woman, she shook off the feeling of fatigue which her exertions at Mrs. Sheepshanks's had occasioned, and ceased not to add touch to touch, and divide, and subdivide ringlet from ringlet, till, as she gazed on the finished picture, she felt that there was no more to be done!

A poet has said that

> Industry to beauty adds new grace.

And though it is probable that this expres-

sion originally alluded to labours of another kind, it is impossible not to perceive that it may be beautifully applied to the charming woman whose image is now before our mind's eye.

Nothing, surely, can be imagined more touching than the occupation and appearance of Mrs. Allen at this time; and a painter would do well to seize and embody a moment of feeling so calculated to find sympathy in every female heart. We all know that pretty women love to adorn themselves for conquest; and we smile, though with no very harsh satire, at the vanity that flutters the while around their fair bosoms.

But how different was the spectacle offered by Mrs. Major Allen, as she sat in her lone chamber in Van Dieman's Land! Her whole soul occupied, it is true, with the idea of her own beauty; but in the hope, not of slaying whole hecatombs of lovers with that beauty, as perhaps she might have dreamed of in the giddy days of yore, but of transmitting it to a dear pledge of wedded love,

who should carry it down through unnumbered generations of posterity!

Callous must be the heart, and lifeless the imagination, that does not kindle at this image!

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## CHAPTER II.

PRIDE AND PLEASURE—PORTRAIT OF A MOTHER—DOMESTIC ANECDOTES—AFFECTIONATE REMINISCENCES—CONFIDENCE PROMISED.

At length the happy hour arrived, and Mrs. Major Allen became a mother. Only those who have waited as long as this lady had done for the honoured blessing, can be capable of appreciating her feelings on the occasion.

It is not, nevertheless, recorded of her by those who knew her best, that any very remarkable developement of the organ of philoprogenitiveness was perceptible in her formation. The triumphant gladness of her heart arose from a complex variety of intellectual impressions with which this sort of mere animal organization had, in truth, very little to do. It was the consciousness, that while almost all

other married ladies had children, she had none, which had galled her. It was the idea, that her well-secured money would "have to go to somebody who did not belong to her," that rankled at her heart; and it was a vague suspicion that her gay husband occasionally alluded to her childless condition, and quizzed her ignorance of all nursery concerns in his conversation with other, and perhaps younger ladies, which irritated her spirit. It was, therefore, the cure for all these gnawing griefs that she blessed and hailed with rapture, when a bouncing, stout-screaming little girl was put into her arms.

Most ladies love a little fuss upon such occasions, and it is not very wonderful if Mrs. Major Allen coveted a good deal. Though feeling as little like an invalid as any lady ever did under such circumstances, she would not abate an hour of the regular stipulated month's confinement, which she had heard repeatedly spoken of as the proper period of retreat for ladies of delicate health. Not, indeed, that she desired to live alone till the baby-moon's

*Mrs Major Allen receives lying-in visits.*

evolution was complete—on the contrary: not only her friend and constant preceptress, Mrs. Sheepshanks, but all the other genteel ladies of Sydney, were given to understand that they might come to look at Mrs. Major Allen and her beautiful baby every morning if they liked it; and as very sufficient caudle, and vast quantities of plum-cake, were daily distributed, they all did like it very mnch, and came accordingly.

Any lady of any land might, indeed, have found much in Mrs. Allen's Sydney dressing-room, at this time, to repay the trouble of a visit, provided, that is to say, it was within tolerably easy reach of them. It might not, perhaps, have been worth while to sail round half the world in order to enter it; yet there was a vast deal there both to see and to admire.

Reading people already know that Mrs. Major Allen was remarkable for her taste in dress; and that wherever display was called for, her peculiar genius appeared to the greatest advantage. The retirement of a sick chamber might, by many, be considered as likely to

check, at least for a time, this propensity for striking decoration; but such was not the case with Mrs. Allen, and though in a different style, her toilet was as distinguished during her first month of maternity, as at any period of her existence. From the hour she quitted her bed, which, feeling herself exceedingly strong and well, she insisted upon doing with as little loss of time as possible, her costume was perfect. This part of the bnsiness had been long meditated upon, and the preparation for it having commenced at a very early stage of her hopes, was persevered in with unwearied industry to the end. Her long-loved satin-stitch, was, upon this occasion, as heretofore, of the most essential use to her; indeed, without it, she never could have reached that perfection of attire for herself, her room, and her child, which became the admiration of Sydney, and all its neighbouring villas.

Where a great effect is produced by very delicate touches, it is not altogether easy either to follow the process, or do justice to the result; but what is both original and beautiful

should never be passed over in silence, from the doubting timidity of those whose duty it is to describe it.

The curtains of Mrs. Major Allen's apartment were, upon this occasion, of full rose-coloured calico, covered with a species of muslin so open in its texture, as to be exported for mosquito-nets. Upon the draperies of these she had, some weeks before her confinement, affixed some white scallops of her own invention, each one having a little tassel of rose-coloured calico, cut into slips, attached to it. Her sofa, removed from the parlour for the occasion, was clothed in the same style, and elicited an exclamation of wonder and delight from every one who approached it. Three small cushions, carelessly balanced on the back and arms of this extensive couch, were also of the same gay and happy hue, and not a corner of them but showed in patterns of labyrinthine grace and intricacy, the powers of a skilful needle.

Mrs. Major Allen herself was habited in a robe of white, which, though not of a parti

cularly fine texture, was really exquisitely elegant, as all the Sydney ladies agreed, from the profusion of elaborate satin-stitch bestowed upon its cuffs and collar.

"I always said so," observed Mrs. Major Allen to her nurse, the first time she put on one of the two beautiful robes thus prepared—"I always said that there was nothing in the whole world like satin-stitch for giving an elegant finish; and I will tell you what, nurse, you may depend upon it, that amongst all the things that a woman does, there is nothing, positively nothing, that answers so well as satin-stitch."

It is no use to talk of THE cap of Mrs. Major Allen upon this occasion, for she not only wore a succession of caps, all more or less indebted to the same favourite decoration for their superiority to all other caps—but moreover, with a refinement of taste, and ingenuity of arrangement, only to be equalled, perhaps, by the manner in which progressive sunshine is made to steal upon the pictures of the diorama, almost every day was made to chronicle

her approach to convalescence by some delicate strengthening, if I may so say, of her beauty. The rouge, which long habit had made so habitually a part of her daily *puttings on*, that within twenty-four hours of Miss Allen's birth, the maternal cheek had received—

——— a little red,

was, nevertheless, used with such forbearing moderation, that the lady looked, as she ought to do, considerably paler than usual; and it was only by increasing, day by day, the skilfully modulated bloom, that at the happy termination of "her month," Mrs. Major Allen appeared as glowing a representation of youth, beauty, and health, as before. The copious quantity of ringlets too, which, excepting that they happened to be of a somewhat softer texture, differed little from those which had fanned the dusty air of the Silverton ball-room, when she danced with Captain Tate, appeared in like manner by degrees, and, to use Voltaire's charming words, returned to enchant the world

——— Pas à pas,
Comme un jour doux, dans les yeux délicants.

When first she sat up in bed, one shining black corkscrew, peeping forth from each side beneath the embroidered nightcap, was all that she deemed congruous to her condition. On the morrow a second came, and then a third, till at length the whole pendant mass, black as right, yet lustrous in its rich and oily glossiness, once more spread its lurid glories on each side her radiant face.

As to the dress and general appearance of the baby, it varied according to the hours of the day. Its admirable mother, who piqued herself on being an excellent manager, was a great economist in all that appertained to the laundry department, and before it was many hours old, she discovered that care must be taken, as to its dear little expenses in that line, as well as in its papa's and her own. So the darling poppet was not always prepared for company; but when it was, the fulness of the mother's heart might easily be read in the elaborate decoration of its attire. In a word, New South Wales had never before seen such a mother and child, and nothing could exceed

the admiration they inspired, or the high consideration in which the Allen family, one and all, were held.

Meanwhile, the Major kept his word, and did take care that all the little parties in which he was engaged, either at home or abroad, should *answer*. Nevertheless, his parental prudence kept pace with his success, and his lady's tightly-settled, and regularly-remitted income, continued to supply all their expenses; so that the Major's steady winnings went on accumulating in a manner that spoke strongly of the fundamental improvement which had taken place in his character and morals since the period when the reader and Mrs. Barnaby were first introduced to him at Clifton.

These winnings, indeed, particularly if stated night after night, or day by day, would, to European ears, appear mere bagatelles, hardly worth recording in a professional gamester's account; but to an inhabitant of Sydney, the yearly aggregate, if roundly named, which, however, never happened to occur, would have been considered as enormous. In this case, as

in every other, unremitting perseverance does wonders.

Nulla dies sine linea,

is a receipt to fill volumes; and on the same principles, a purse of no small dimensions may be filled, by one who, playing with *assured* success, never suffers any hour in the day and night to be passed in idleness, when it is possible to put a pack of cards in action.

Such was the system of Major Allen; and, though on a small scale, Sydney was no bad field of action for him. Assuredly there was no Crockford's, where, within the space of half a night, a man, without quitting his chair, may be sure of finding an opportunity, if he seek it, of beggaring himself or his neighbour. But there were little quiet corners where, by day or night, small hazards might be played for among the idlers, of which the more industrious part of the population know little or nothing; and a taste for that tempting seesaw, the gaming-table, generated perhaps in the brilliant *salons* of Paris, or the club-houses of London, may find wherewithal to keep itself

alive, even in the deep retreats of New South Wales.

Major Allen was therefore by no means an idle man, neither could he fairly be called an intemperate one. The glass of rum-and-milk that greeted the morn, and the tumbler or two of whiskey-toddy that hailed the genial hours of night, cannot be justly quoted in contradiction to this; for nobody ever saw Major Allen drunk. Moreover, his habits, in all things appertaining to expenditure, were exceedingly careful; though he by no means denied himself the constant comfort of a good dinner, or the occasional gratification of a little display; so that he and his lady were decidedly classed among the very first people in Sydney. In temper, and general domestic demeanour, as favourable a report may be made of him as most gentlemen under similar circumstances would be likely to deserve; so on the whole it is to be hoped that the character of this individual, who from his near connexion with my heroine must make an important figure in the drama of her future life, may be considered

in all respects as improved rather than the contrary, since the reader parted from him.

But, notwithstanding all these excellent domestic qualities, Major Allen was not what could be called a confidential husband. Indeed, there were some circumstances connected with his first appearance in the colony, which his wife was never fully able to understand. It was evident that he had some powerful friends among the persons in authority, and the deference and very strict observance he paid them, proved him to be of a most grateful temper; but he never entered with his charming lady into any explanation of the origin of this close connexion between them. Neither did he appear to deem it necessary that she should be troubled with any statement respecting the little sums he was accumulating; nay, his notions of a well-regulated family economy, might have led him to prefer taking his lady's income under his own immediate and separate control; but here, after a somewhat spirited trial on occasion of the two first quarterly payments, he gave in; Mrs. Allen not being a

woman to give way easily, where she felt herself to be right. So thenceforward he contented himself with knowing that all household expenses, of every kind whatever, including of course his own dress and little personal appointments, were defrayed regularly and in the most creditable manner, that is to say, without credit, by this fund.

Now and then, indeed, thinking the little occasional assistance which her quick faculties enabled her to afford whenever his favourite amusement went on in her presence, gave her some right to inquire, she ventured to question him respecting his winnings. But the following short specimen of such dialogues will show that he well knew how to answer them.

"For Heaven's sake, Major! what *do* you do with all your winnings?" she said to him one day, when she would greatly have liked to have got hold of a portion of them to assist in the purchase of a little finery. "I see you pocket lots of cash night after night, and when am I to be the better for it?"

"Don't put yourself in a flurry, my love; I

often lose money, of course; though God knows, and you know, too, my love, that I always take every possible precaution to avoid it; but, nevertheless, it will happen."

"You have not got the face to tell me, that you do not make money by playing?" said Mrs. Major Allen, with some appearance of excitement.

"No, my love! I know my duty both to myself and you too well, to continue playing if such were the case. But it is an amusement that I like, and I take the most scrupulous care that it shall never become any annoyance to you, my dear angel! which you know it must do, did I not take care, when I win, to lay by the amount to be in readiness for the time when I may lose."

Mrs. Major Allen snuffed the air with a slight appearance of agitation, but only said, "I hope you DO lay it by, Major Allen."

This occurred some months before the birth of the little Martha; and it was when she was exactly three months old, that a snug small evening party at home, attended with a run of

very obvious good fortune, led to a renewal of the subject.

"A pretty sum you must have pouched last night, Major," said his lady, as she poured out his tea on the following morning, while their infant heiress lay sweetly slumbering in a cradle at her side.

"Yes, my love, pretty well."

"Then I do trust our poor child will be the better for it," said Mrs. Major Allen, putting down the teapot, and placing her right hand on the top of the cradle, while with the other she fondly dallied with the little coverlid, as if it wanted more tucking in, than she had given it a dozen times over already. "I do hope, Major Allen, that for the first time in your life you will do something to assist in the maintenance of your family."

"My family," replied the Major, cherupping very affectionately towards the cradle, "have not been very long in want of maintenance."

"Why, we have been married," replied Mrs. Allen, "above a year, sir; and except just

furnishing the place, and giving me that trumpery necklace, which is no more to be compared to my shells than light to darkness, you have never spent to my knowledge, a single farthing of your own, from that hour to this. If it had not been for my own fortune, your family would have been pretty much in want of a maintenance."

"My dearest creature! can you imagine that a man of my knowledge of the world, and general *savoir vivre*, would ever have been guilty of that most unpardonable of all human actions, the marrying a woman without fortune? No, my beautiful Mrs. Major Allen, I adore you far too vehemently, ever to have been guilty of such treacherous unmanly baseness, as to have seduced you into marriage with—with—in short my love, with myself, had I not known that, though not so rich as I once thought you, there was no danger of your actually starving in consequence of your affection for me."

"And you probably thought there might be no danger of your own starving either, dear

Major?" replied the lady, laughing a sort of experimental laugh, as not quite certain how the hit may be taken. However, her excellent husband was in extremely good humour, and only laughed a little in return, buttering his toast the while as pleasantly as possible.

This, of course, acted as an encouragement upon the lady, and she again hinted that she should like a little money.

"Upon my word I should be delighted to oblige you, my dearest Mrs. Allen," he replied with every appearance of gravity; "but the birth of this darling babe furnishes the very strongest motive a man is capable of feeling, for prudence and economy. I cannot give you money, my dear love! It is the greatest possible grief to me to be obliged to say so, but I should never forgive myself, never! Nor ever, I truly believe, should I sleep in peace again, did I for a moment yield to any temptation that might affect the future fortune of our dear little daughter!"

Here again the Major cherrupped at the cradle, and Mrs. Allen, heaving a deep sigh,

only muttered in reply, "Then it is quite impossible I should buy any feathers for her bonnet!"

The tone of this very happy New South Welsh couple to each other was, in more respects than one, rather singular. There was occasionally a vast deal of fondness displayed on both sides, yet a sharp observer might sometimes have fancied that there was some latent feeling of suspicion and reserve at their hearts. If this, however, were really the case, they conducted themselves on the whole with great discretion, and might not unaptly have been quoted as a proof that all feelings, with proper schooling, may ever be made subservient to will. This, indeed, must always be the case where motive is strong; and motive was strong enough both in the Major and his lady to produce a line of conduct in each, running so parallel to each other that there was little or no danger of their ever producing a concussion by crossing. Thus, Major Allen never, even in his most playful moments, nor when the whiskey-toddy had been the most seductive,

hazarded the slightest allusion either to his friend Maintry, or to his excellent servant William, or to the cause or manner of his voyage out, or to the beautiful Isabella d'Almafonte, or even to the Duke of Wellington. While on the other hand, Mrs. Major Allen appeared totally to have forgotten Silverton Park, and her beautiful set of grays; never gave the slightest indication of remembering such a place as Clifton, such an Abigail as Betty Jacks, such wretches as the tradesmen of Cheltenham, or such an extraordinary dull place as the Fleet Prison.

There can be no doubt in the world that this was the best plan they could follow; for without it there would have been so remarkable a discrepancy between their confidential reminiscences, and the dignified strain of their ordinary bearing, as must have made their lives appear, even to each other, like one long-drawn-out conspiracy. Whereas, under the existing system, every thing went on so smoothly, that it might almost be doubted whether they had not really and truly under-

gone some Lethean process which had cleared off effectually and for ever all the heavier shadows that hung upon the background of their past existence. In a word, "Bygones are Bygones" would have been the most expressive and appropriate motto that they could possibly have adopted.

Mrs. Major Allen was certainly in many respects a very clever woman. Having acutely enough found out what the Major's tactics were and were likely to be, respecting the past, she not only adopted the same with very excellent feminine tact; but taking the fullest advantage of the general amnesty thus granted by memory to all former faults and follies, she gazed at her black-eyed little daughter with renewed hope, and renewed ambition, and felt as fresh in spirit, and as ready to set off again in pursuit of new plots, and new projects, as if she had never met with a disappointment in her life.

But if she wisely cast a veil over what it was disagreeable to remember, the same wisdom led her, as much as it was possible to do so,

to keep for ever before her husband's eyes, her own, and those of every body who approached her, the recollection of all that was creditable in which she could claim a share. Those who know the character of the man can feel no doubt that here, too, the happy sympathy of disposition existing between the married pair would have manifested itself, if the thing had been possible; but herein it would seem that the lady had the advantage of the gentleman. For while she discoursed pretty considerably at large concerning her aunt Compton, of Compton Basset, her dearly beloved niece, Mrs. General Hubert, and above all of her great friend, and great connexion, Lady Elizabeth Norris, the Major, though now and then in general Sydney society echoing the affectionate family allusions of his wife, was never heard to obtrude the mention of his own relations upon any body.

It was impossible for a woman so acute as Mrs. Major Allen, not to perceive that these frequent references to the old country, increased their consideration in the new one,

and this indeed so evidently, that at length it struck her as being well worth while to make an effort towards renewing some intercourse with those, the far-off sound of whose names was so advantageous.

One afternoon that the Major, who not unfrequently passed his *soirées* from home, had declared his intention of remaining during the entire evening in his own mansion, where he hoped a friend would call and perhaps play a quiet game or two of piquet with him, he happened to say, after giving his lady instructions about making the toddy, and one or two other little particulars, "I like to think, dearest, that whatever I DO win will be sure, sooner or later, to help out the fortune of our darling baby."

Nothing was so sure to put Mrs. Major Allen in good humour, as an observation of this kind from her husband; for the charming buoyancy of her spirits was such that she already—though her young daughter was little more than a twelvemonth old—had determined in her own mind, that the third Martha should do

better in life than either of her beautiful predecessors had done. With a degree of contentment, to which no words can do justice, she perceived in the features, hair, and complexion of her child, that she had not gazed upon her own image in vain; and blessing the prescient tenderness which had dictated her doing so, she prophesied, as she contemplated the black eyes and dark hair of the darling, that in HER the race of Compton should rise higher than all aunt Betsy's economy had ever yet contrived to place it. Mindful, however, of the many proofs which had met her in the course of her career, that money *was* an important auxiliary in all affairs of love, she became, perhaps, almost immoderately anxious as to everything that concerned the little Martha's pecuniary interests. It is possible that the Major was in some degree aware of this; for it is certain that whenever particularly desirous of ensuring the concurrence or aid of his lady, in any of his little schemes, he now invariably hinted that it was probable their result, if well managed, would be favourable to the future prospects of their daughter.

On the occasion above alluded to, his reference to this produced the happiest effect. Mrs. Allen smiled with the greatest sweetness, and even playfully pinched his cheek as she replied, "Never fear me, dear!—Hoard away, Major, and when you have got enough to take us back, why back we will go, won't we?"

The Major returned the pinch, nodded his head, but said nothing.

"I suppose you are afraid to promise, Major, for fear I should plague you about it?—Hey?—Don't be afraid, I shall know how to mind my hits, and shall not be over stupid, I dare say, in giving a guess about the when, and the how too, though I may not happen positively to *know* any thing about it. However, if you will take my advice, you will turn your *thoughts* that way, let it be as long as it will before you can turn *yourself*—unless indeed there is any particular reason why you should stay here for life."

"For life?—Oh! no, my love, decidedly not for life," replied the Major, rather eagerly. "But I don't quite understand, dear, what you

mean by turning my thoughts that way," he continued with a musing air; and then, after a moment's pause, added, "To say the truth, my dear Mrs. Allen, my thoughts seldom turn for long together in any other direction. The doings here, my dear, let a man be as persevering as he will, are pitiful in the extreme; and it is impossible to think of what's going on every night on the other side of the water, without being devilishly provoked, I promise you—particularly when a man feels that he improves every day he lives."

Mrs. Major Allen listened to this with the greatest satisfaction; it was the first time she had ever heard her husband distinctly declare an intention of returning to England; and though at the very bottom of her heart she had determined to do so herself, one day or other, even if she found herself obliged to leave him behind, the discovering that his wishes accorded with her own was highly gratifying, and she immediately determined upon opening her mind to him concerning a scheme that had for some time past occupied her head.

"My darling Major!" she exclaimed, "how delighted I am to hear you talk so!—Remember the saying, 'where there's a will there's a way'—and do you only give me your promise that when you CAN go, you will, and I will give mine to push on in every way possible to the same delightful end. I will spend just next to nothing, dearest, in any way; I will buy no feathers, either for baby or myself, and almost no flowers neither; I'll promise not to think of any more satin dresses, if it is for—almost a dozen years to come; and I will trust, for making a decent appearance, altogether to turning, trimming, and satin-stitch. In short, my dearest Major, there is nothing in the whole world that I would not do to get back."

"I am glad to hear all this, my love, very glad. There is nothing like having a few *rouleaux* beforehand, my dear, depend upon it—stick to the saving plan about clothes, and all your own little expenses, and it is quite impossible to say what may be the fruits of it, one of these days."

"Oh! but you don't know, Major, what else

I have got in my head," replied his wife, with a gay glance that reminded him of Clifton; "when we DO go back it shall not be my fault if we do not find somebody worth introducing our child to."

"Who will that be, my dear," said he, with a glance almost as gay as her own; "to my Lord Mucklebury?"—for with a degree of generous confidence, which really did honour to her heart, Mrs. Major Allen had confessed to her husband how very near marriage she had been with that nobleman, and how completely it was owing to a mere accidental misunderstanding between them that the match had been broken off.

"It is by no means impossible that I may do that good service both to you and to her, my love," answered the lady; "for I have every reason to flatter myself that what was love, very fervent love, certainly, has now mellowed into friendship; and I have little doubt that by the time we return he may be able to see me, and even my child, without pain—though he may perhaps heave a guiltless sigh, that he

is not the father of it. But it was not of him, Major Allen, I do assure you that it was not of him I was thinking."

"Of whom then, Mrs. Allen—of those Clifton people? Pray do not let us talk about them. For in the first place, I hate them all particularly; and in the next, they are not in a station of life that can do me, or any man of fashion, service."

Mrs. Allen was not at all displeased at hearing her husband thus class himself; but her change of colour would have been visible, had she not worn rouge, when he named Clifton. The emotion passed, however, and she resumed without any trace of embarrassment.

"No, no, no, no, Major Allen, I am not so humble-minded as you imagine. It is not my brother and sister Peters, nor any of my nephews and nieces in that very commercial district, that I am thinking about, but of persons in a *very* different station, I assure you. Be patient for a moment, and I will explain myself."

The Major was at that moment smoking a

cigar, and continued the operation with as much composure as she could have desired, while she rose from her chair and opened the drawer of a work-table, at the further extremity of the apartment. From this drawer she took what might be recognised at the first glance as an English newspaper, and which, though of no very recent date, was the last that had been received in the colony.

"I have promised never to be extravagant again, my dear," said the lady, advancing up the room, and searching the precious columns as she walked, for the article she wished to show him, "and therefore you must not scold me for having bought this newspaper, I really could not resist it when I found this paragraph concerning the very nearest relations I have in the world. Let me read it to you, shall I?"

The Major smoked on, but graciously nodded his head.

"It is the account of a drawing-room held at St. James's Palace, Major Allen—I was always fond of reading those sort of articles even in England, for nothing keeps up our

acquaintance with the fashionable world so well—besides the insight it gives one into dress; and here of course it is ten thousand times more valuable still, to prevent one's forgetting the very names of one's relations, and all other persons of rank."

Here Mrs. Major Allen began reading a very long list of persons present at the drawing-room, and at length came to the names of "General and Mrs. Hubert," as being among them.

"I suppose you know who *she* is, Major Allen, if you do not remember him."

"Not I," said the Major.

"What, my dear!—don't you remember my darling niece, Agnes? The girl that I devoted myself to so completely, before she married?"

"What, the little Willoughby, who was so skittish that she would never let one speak to her. Oh! dear yes, I remember her perfectly."

"Well, Major, it is she who is now Mrs. General Hubert, and who has been, as you perceive, presented at Court."

"Oh! she married the stiff-backed Colonel, did she? I forgot all about it, my dear. And is it to the General's lady that you are going to introduce me?"

There was a comic sort of leer in the eye of the Major as he said this, which his wife did not altogether understand; but after looking at him for a moment, she replied,

"To be sure it is, my dear. My darling Agnes, Mrs. General Hubert, as of course I must now call her, will be beyond all question the most fitting and proper person to introduce our daughter into society. Nor is there the slightest reason why she should not be presented at court when she is old enough; and it is just because she is not old enough yet, that I am content to wait so patiently till it may suit you, my dear Major, to accompany us back to Europe. But though there might be no particular use in our going, as yet, it will, as I have lately thought, be extremely proper for me to write to my niece, and I certainly shall do so immediately."

"Depend upon it, my dear, I shall make no

sort of objection," replied the amiable Major; "but don't you think it just possible that she may not answer you?"

"No, Major Allen, I do not. I know better than any one else can, except herself, dear child! how devoted was the attachment I showed her—and it is not in nature to believe that whenever I chose to recall myself to her remembrance, she should be otherwise than delighted at hearing from me. I will not deny that some trifling circumstances occurred previous to her marriage, and to mine, which displeased me. However, everything was made up, most affectionately before I left England, and a very touching scene it was, I assure you, with poor dear Willoughby, her father, who suddenly returned from some place like this, I don't know where, abroad, and brought another daughter with him. A charming creature she is—not quite so lovely and elegant-looking as my niece, but very pretty, and married to an extremely rich young son of a baronet. So you see, Major, the connexion throughout is most extremely desirable for our Martha, and

when the time comes for our return, will unquestionably be of the greatest importance to her. So write I shall most decidedly."

The indifference with which the Major at first appeared to listen to her, relaxed by degrees as she went on, and when at length she paused, he said, without any sneer at all,

"Very well, my dear; you are perfectly a woman of the world, which is exactly what I would wish you to be; and nothing could be more desirable than that our little girl should, in due time, be introduced to such very near relations. But, I believe, I have hinted to you before, that there are two or three reasons which should render my immediate return to England inconvenient. I have, hitherto, never entered upon any explanation of them; because, in fact, they possessed little interest in themselves, and were of no consequence whatever to us in our present situation. But if it should prove that there really is any chance of our getting among the set you mention, when we get back, it may be as well to make you understand the affair sufficiently to prevent

any awkward blunders on your part, which might be inconvenient. Not that the thing, in point of fact, is of any great consequence; but nevertheless, as it involves some trifling etiquette, that some sort of people think a great deal about, it may be as well to put you *au fait* of the business; and I shall have great pleasure, I am sure, in giving you this proof of my confidence.

"But here comes our friend Belmaine. Remember, love, all our established hints and tokens; and remember, also, that whatever I *do* chance to win will be added to the fund, which I trust we shall be able to lay up for our dear girl's benefit. There! he is obliged to knock again! Why does not that stupid girl open the door? We will finish our talk to morrow, dear. Only remember that you are not to write to England till I have explained myself."

The worthy Mr. Belmaine here made his appearance, and was received in the most friendly manner, both by the Major and his lady. He was not an old acquaintance, but

appeared to be a very valued one, for nothing was omitted that could make their substantial tea-drinking agreeable; and the little Martha, who with almost precocious strength of limb already waddled fearlessly over the floor, was induced to add her note of welcome, by a wonderfully articulated "ta, ta."

Soon after the meal was concluded, Mrs. Major Allen retired for a few moments to superintend the *coucher* of her beautiful child, and ere she returned, the two gentlemen had very rationally sought and found consolation for her absence in a pack of cards.

Whenever Major Allen indulged himself in the presence of his wife with a game at piquet, whist, or écarté, the only amusements of the kind he ever ventured upon, his lady had the appearance of being in, what is vulgarly called, a fidget; for she walked about the room, looked at the different hands, and in short, seemed in search of amusement for herself which she could not find. On such occasions, it was usual for the Major to say, "Pray, my dear love, do sit down, you have no idea how you

worry me by moving about so." And she replied, "Well then, my dear, I will take my work, and amuse myself now and then by looking at your hand." And then she did take her work, and sat down behind him, very close indeed, sometimes twitching his hair in a lively manner, and sometimes playfully running her needle into his shoulder, always permitting her animated eyes to invite his partner to take part in the jest. After enduring this for about five minutes, it was usual for the Major to lose his patience, and to exclaim,—

"Upon my word, my love, I cannot play if you go on so. You are as frolicsome as a kitten, dearest, and I give you my honour I can't bear to check you, but, upon my soul, I am such a nervous player, that I don't know what I am about for two minutes together, while you are playing your monkey tricks. Could you not take your work a little further away, love?"

Mrs. Major Allen could never stand this reproof, but constantly replied, rather in a plaintive tone,

"And pretty dull sort of work I shall find

it! I dare say, Mr. This, or Mr. That, (whoever the Major's partner might be,) will not be so cross as you are, dear, so I will go and sit by him."

And she did go and sit by him, or rather behind him, but so quietly, that it was next to impossible that he should be churlish enough to make any objection to her remaining there.

This little domestic scene was repeated on the present occasion, with just sufficient variation, as to phrase and frolic, as might suffice to prevent its appearing stupidly repetitive; but when it had been gone through, and Mrs. Major Allen had established herself exactly in the place she wished to occupy, her attention involuntary wandered from the game she overlooked at the present moment, to the greater one, in which she flattered herself she should be engaged at a future time. The mysterious words of her husband, too, haunted her rather painfully. The spelling and putting together which her active intellect rendered inevitable, produced a result, which, if not quite new to her imagination, appeared at this moment more

than usually important; and, in short, it was with the greatest difficulty that she conducted herself throughout the very long evening according to her husband's wishes.

She really exerted herself, however, to do the best she could; and when at length the beef-steak, sweet potatoes, and whiskey-toddy were called for, she performed all the duties of a careful hostess perfectly. So that at last, at about two o'clock in the morning, the snug little party broke up, under circumstances perfectly satisfactory to the Major, who gave his weary wife the reward she well merited, by saying, as he drew up the strings of his inflated purse,

"Thank you, my dear—everything was very nice, and very well managed. Now let us get to bed, and to-morrow morning we will have a talk about the best way for you to write home to your relations. It would be a fine thing for our little missey, to be sure! and I think it may be done if we manage well. People talk of good fortune, and bad fortune, but depend upon it, my dear Barnaby, (it was thus

he ever addressed her when in particularly high spirits,) depend upon it, that it is human skill which regulates human affairs, and that when some great misfortune befalls us, it is because we have committed some great blunder; while, on the contrary, if some striking blessing, as it is called, rewards our endeavours, it proves, beyond the possibility of any reasonable doubt, that we have known how to set about what we had to do, and performed the task skilfully and well. There—don't let us talk any more to-night, because that last glass of toddy has made me very sleepy. Good night, dear, good night!"

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## CHAPTER III.

THE PROMISED CONFIDENCE BESTOWED—INTERESTING NARRATIVE—CONJUGAL HARMONY—RENEWED CORRESPONDENCE.

THAT nothing might interrupt the conversation which Mrs. Major Allen was quite determined should not be delayed, she would not even suffer her daughter to appear at the breakfast-table the following morning; but, though the young lady was crying pretty lustily at the other end of the house, ventured to assure her papa, when he kindly inquired for her, that she was fast asleep.

Having set all things in such order that no further assistance from without could be required, Mrs. Allen thus began:

"Well, Major Allen, I have made up my mind not to let this blessed day pass over my

head without writing to my dear niece, Mrs. General Hubert. I have been looking over the paper again—there is the whole account of her dress at full length, which I quite forgot to show you, my dear. Such taste!—such splendour! Don't you think, my dear Allen, that it is our bounden duty to leave not a stone unturned, that might help to place our dear child among such cousins as these?"

"We will leave neither sticks nor stones unturned, as you call it, my dear. But the matter must be managed very judiciously. There is no doubt in the world that the relationship is quite near enough to render our entering their circle perfectly natural and proper; and considering all you did for that girl Agnes, it can hardly be doubted that she will welcome you with open arms. She must be a monster, indeed, if she did not! Nevertheless, strange as it must seem to you, my dear creature, there will be a good deal of caution necessary in the manner in which you introduce *me* to them."

Mrs. Major Allen put down the portion of buttered roll which she was in the act of raising

to her lips, and turned rather faint. However, as she by no means wished the Major to guess what was passing in her mind, she made an effort to recover herself, which was as successful as such efforts always are; and then she replied with great apparent composure, "Well, deary, you said I should know all about it to-day—so get on, there's a good man,—I am afraid of nothing, not I, so speak out, and you shall never see me flinch."

"You are a charming creature, my love, and deserve all the devoted attachment I have shown you. Now listen to me, then, and join your excellent judgment to mine, as to the best mode of conquering the difficulties which lie in our way. But first I must ask you, if you have written at all to England since the death of O'Donagough, or since your marriage with me?"

"Why, no, my dear—to say the truth, I have not," replied the lady;—"for, to speak honestly, I felt half afraid of being laughed at, for the facility with which I suffered my former passion to regain its hold upon me."

"You were right, perfectly right. I am exceedingly glad of this, for reasons which I can easily explain to you. Then in fact, dear, you have never sent any letter to Europe, signed with my name? Nor any announcing your last husband's death?"

"No, I never have."

"And you never shall, my darling!" returned the Major, in an accent of very ardent tenderness.

Mrs. Major Allen looked very much, as if she wished to say, "Why?" But she conquered the wish, if she felt it, deeming it best to let her husband tell his story his own way. After a pause, sufficiently long to permit his finishing his first cup of tea, the Major continued.

"No, my love, never! This declaration must, I am sure, astonish you, though your sweet reliance on me will not permit you to say so. Believe me, darling, this noble confidence is not misplaced; and the time will come, doubt, it not, when you will thank me for the prudence which thus anxiously seeks to spare you all

alarm. The fact is, my love, that an affair of honour, which ended fatally, was the cause of my leaving England."

Mrs. Major Allen did not believe one word of this—but she was an admirable wife; and instead of contumaciously expressing any doubt, meekly replied, "Really!"

"Yes, my love! My unerring hand sent the leaden messenger of death too truly! and nothing but the conscientious conviction, that the wretch who thus fell deserved his fate, could console me for having been the author of it!"

As the Major said this, he concealed his agition, or at any rate, his face, by his extended hand, leaving room, however, between his third and fourth finger, to peep at the face of his wife, and see how she bore it. Fortunately, that excellent and intelligent lady perceived that he did so, and immediately checked an inclination to smile, which might have been disagreeably interpreted. So instead of this, she blew her nose, and then said, very gravely,

"Oh! my dear, there is no good in fretting

and vexing about those kind of things. They must happen, you know, occasionally; and to say the truth, I did not think that any gentleman of your profession, any military gentleman, I mean, would have thought much about it."

"You are quite right, my dear—quite right, in a general way. But there were one or two very unfortunate circumstances attending this affair. In the first place, we had no surgeon on the ground. This of itself you know, though purely accidental on my part, lays one open to the most abominable constructions. Then my adversary's second ran away. Stupid fellow! as if any harm could have come to him! In short, I was advised by my lawyer himself, as well as by all my military friends, not to run the risk of a trial. This, sweetest, is my history. And now you will be at no loss to understand *why* I should never wish you to send a letter to your friends in England, signed with the guiltless, but unfortunate, name of Allen."

There was the struggle of a moment in the heart of Mrs. Allen, as to whether she should

have the pleasure of telling the master of her destiny, that she was a vast deal too clever to believe a single word of all he had said, or suffer him to lie his way, unchecked, out of the very disagreeable predicament in which she was pretty confident he was placed. But luckily, she remembered the weakness of a divided bundle of fagots, and at the same instant, determined at once to swallow whatever her spouse in his wisdom, thought it convenient to administer; and moreover, to the very best of her power, to make all others swallow it likewise.

"You may depend upon it, my dear, I shall sign the letter I am going to write to my dear Agnes, with whatever name you bid me," was the gentle and generous answer of Mrs. Allen, as soon as she had made up her mind to keep her cleverness to herself; and perhaps she gave this promise the more readily, from remembering, as she spoke the name of Agnes, how very little honour, either in her eyes or in those of General Hubert, that of Allen was likely to confer on the young cousin she was about to

announce to them, even if unaccompanied by any of the adventures, which she thought it possible might have become connected with it, since they last had the pleasure of hearing it pronounced by her.

"No man was ever blessed with a more charming wife than I am!" cried the Major with sudden gaiety, and probably well pleased at having got through the business of explanation so happily. Then, after a moment's consideration, he added, "Why, my dear, should you not continue your late name of O'Donagough? Upon my honour, I have no prejudice whatever against it, if you have not; and the doing so might, perhaps, be less embarrassing for you than taking any other."

This proposition evidently took the lady by surprise; and the manner in which she now looked up in the Major's face, was without any premeditation at all.

"Perhaps you have some objection to this, my dear? Perhaps the name of Allen is dearer to you than all others?" said the Major.

"Oh? I don't know I am sure, anything

about that. It would be foolish, you know, my dear, to take fancies when we are talking about business," replied his high-minded wife: "I only look so, because I don't quite understand what it is you would be at. Am I to tell my niece, and my nephew the General, and my brother-in-law, Mr. Willoughby, and all the rest of them, that you are a relative of my late husband, Mr. O'Donagough?"

"By no means, my love. That must inevitably create confusion. What I propose, is merely that you should state yourself still to be the wife of the respected Mr. O'Donagough himself."

"But, good gracious, Major, how could I do that when we go back, after every one of them has seen Mr. O'Donagough, and has been regularly introduced to him in person? And besides," she added, somewhat in a lower key, "they have most of them seen you into the bargain."

"True, dearest, true—all quite true; nevertheless, I do not anticipate the slightest inconvenience from this. I have had the honour to

see some of your amiable relations, certainly; and I question not, but they have also seen me. They may likewise have seen your late estimable husband. All this I grant you; but it will make no difference whatever, my love. Do not be uneasy about that. It will give us no trouble worth naming, I assure you."

"I must confess that now you do puzzle me," replied Mrs. Major Allen, with great *naïveté*, "and I don't know the least bit in the world what you mean."

Major Allen smiled with great complacency upon his charming wife, as he answered, "My lovely Barnaby, you are, without flattery, one of the sharpest-witted, and most intelligent women I ever met with; and it is only on points, where nothing but experience and a more extended knowledge of the world has assisted me, that I can assume any sort of superiority to you; and even here, you have only to open your own charming eyes a little, in order, if not exactly to overtake me, at least to lessen the distance between us. This business of identity, dear love, is a mere bugbear.

A man of any tolerable degree of talent snaps his fingers at it. The late O'Donagough was tall, was he not?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Major Allen, succinctly.

"And so am I, my love. This, believe me, is the only point of difference between man and man, which is really of importance—and even that may be greatly modified. Of course, dearest, I do not speak of cases of daily intimate intercourse. This, I know, does create difficulty—and yet—" Here the Major smiled, and seemed to have some amusing anecdote at the tip of his tongue; but he checked the wish to utter it, and only said, with very matter-of-fact gravity, "Neither Mr. O'Donagough nor I were ever very intimate with these great folks, whose favour you now wish to propitiate; therefore, on that score, there can be no fear of mischief—and now I want your opinion. Speak out, dear! Have you any personal objection to this plan, independent I mean of any fancied embarrassment in putting it into execution?"

"No, I think not," replied Mrs. Major Allen, with considerable promptitude and sincerity of tone; for, during the Major's last speech, she had run over in her mind all the reasons which existed against her particularly wishing to introduce the father of her intended peeress, as the Major Allen of Clifton; and had come very decidedly to the conclusion that she had much rather call him by any other name under heaven.

The Major at once saw that whatever objections might in the first instance have occurred to his proposal, were already removed, and in the fulness of his contentment he gave his lady a kiss, and once more called her his "charming Barnaby."

The mind of this "charming Barnaby" was never idle, and even in the short interval which had passed since the moment when she first fully conceived his project, such a varied multitude of reasons had crowded one over the other into her active brain in favour of it, that she was by this time quite as well pleased by the notion as himself.

Many minor details, however, remained to be settled before they could act upon it; but these were all discussed with the most laughing good-humour, and such a multitude of droll, lively things were said on both sides, that it may be doubted if they had ever enjoyed each other's conversation more, since the first happy hour of confidence at Clifton, when the Major related the history of his former life.

The great question seemed to be whether Major Allen's transmutation into Mr. O'Donagough should precede his departure from the colony, or follow it. In all letters to England, it was of course to be immediate, and it was easy enough to desire that all answers should be directed under cover to Mr. or Mrs. Somebody. But how were they to explain to their South-Welsh friends this singular metamorphosis, if they decided upon its taking place immediately? And what were they to say to their little daughter about it if they put off this alteration of her name and family till she was old enough to ask questions about it?

Besides, who could answer for it, as her mother very judiciously observed, that the little angel might not tell tales on the other side of the water, without intending to do any more harm than a playful lambkin when it says "ba?"

"Hush!" said Major Allen, holding up his forefinger, as a signal that he desired silence. His wife obeyed, and they both *were* silent for at least five minutes. He then altered his position in his chair, setting an elbow firmly on each arm of it, and fixing his eyes stedfastly on his fair lady's face, delivered himself of the valuable result of these five minutes' cogitation, in a tone as decided, and free from all the weak vacillations of doubt, as if he had been listening to the voice of an oracle during the interval.

"My dear love," said he, "the thing lies in a nutshell: you will find upon looking through a box of papers left by the late Mr. O'Donagough, a testamentary paper, by which he bequeaths to you a small landed property in the south of Ireland—I say the south of

Ireland, dearest, because if the acquisition produces no visible alteration in our manner of living, nobody will be surprised at it—a small landed property in the south of Ireland —but bequeathed upon the condition that any husband whom you shall marry, as well as all children whom you may have, shall take and bear the name and arms of O'Donagough. The said estate to be forfeited if the said conditions be not complied with, within one year after the bequest is claimed. If you will leave me for a few minutes, my dear, I think I shall be able to find this document."

These last words were accompanied by a smile which brought the Major's left mustache very nearly to the off corner of his left eye; a conjunction of features that denoted a most happy and facetious frame of mind.

Mrs. Major Allen replied by a laughing and intelligent nod; but said, "You must let me finish this beautiful bit of hot buttered toast first, my dear—I have almost burnt my eyes out to do it. I remember the time, Major, and not so very long ago either, when it was no

less a person than Mrs. General Hubert, this identical grand lady that we read of at court, who knelt down before my fire to do this job for me. Mercy on me!—To be sure, who ever would have thought of poor Sophy's girl coming to be the wife of a general, and presented at court? And what, if you please, is to prevent our girl from doing as well? I'll answer for it she will be ten times handsomer than that pale-faced Agnes ever was—all she had in the world for her was her youth and her eyes. I ask anybody to look at our Martha's eyes, and say if they don't beat those of Agnes out and out; and as to the article of youth—which, by the bye, I *do* think is very necessary to the making a really great match—as to that, you know, my dear, it will be our own fault if we do not let her begin early enough."

"Most assuredly," was the satisfactory reply; upon which the lady stood up, swallowed her last mouthful in that attitude, and with another sprightly nod, prepared to leave the room.

"Stay one moment, dearest!" said the Major; "do you happen, my love, to have any of

the late Mr. O'Donagough's handwriting by you?"

"Oh, yes; lots of it. He was a great writer, you know."

"Do you think you have got his signature, dear?"

"Most likely, love. I will go and rummage his old writing-desk." So saying, Mrs. Major Allen left the room, and in a very few minutes returned to it with a handful of MSS.

"Here are all sorts here," said she, "and a bushel more if you want them, up stairs, with plenty of signatures amongst them. Here's a sermon, look! and here's a calculation of odds about some horse race. He was such a queer man, poor O'Donagough!—I shall always think he was half mad."

"Very likely, love. There, lay them down. That will do perfectly well; now you may go and write your letter if you will, while I look through these papers in search of *the document*, you know."

And now, leaving Major Allen at one writing-table, we must follow his lady to another.

The last letter Mrs. Major Allen had addressed to her niece Agnes was from the Fleet prison: she remembered this and smiled.

"Mercy on me!" she exclaimed in muttered soliloquy. "What a deal has happened to us both since then! Little hussy!—she was then in the very best of her bloom, and she made the most of it; I suspect she was quite right in not coming to me. Ten to one she would have lost the proud colonel if she had; and it is just because I see she is up to a thing or two, that I will take the trouble of writing to her now. Little fox! she was deep as deep; and I don't think her aunt Barnaby was such a very great fool either. Now then, Miss Agnes, let us see if I can't come round you. If it answers, if I can contrive to make her grandeeship useful to my girl, I know who will be the cleverest yet. Now for it then."

"My dearest Agnes!"

"I am not quite sure about that, calling her by her name at first setting off.

"'Agnes, Agnes, thou art mine!'

as the song says. But that will only put her

in mind of fifty things that it would be just as well she should forget. I'll begin again."

"My dearest Niece!

"I will not believe that the three short years which have passed since we parted, can have sufficed to make you forget the nearest blood relation that you have in the world: for unless a grandmother is nearer to us than a mother, which I am sure no one in the world can think, a real aunt, your own dear mother's own sister, must be nearer to you as a relation than all the aunt Betsies in the world, let her be ever so rich, Agnes."

Having proceeded thus far, Mrs. Major Allen put her pen into the ink-bottle, and there let it remain while she read and re-read this exordium. "Yes, that will do," thought she, "that is just the right way to bring in her Christian name familiarly." She then resumed her pen and went on.

"It would give me more pleasure in my distant home than anything else in the world, if, you, my dear sister's own child, would just

give me a line now and then, to tell me how you are going on, and above all things whether you are as happy as I wish you to be. Short as the interview was, it was a great pleasure to me to have got a sight of your dear father. Oh! Agnes, how the sound of his voice did put me in mind of times—gay, happy times, my dear child—before you were born! Pray give my kindest sisterly love to him, and tell him that he would do me the very greatest favour in the world if he would only write a few lines to me. I am sure that if he will but turn a thought back to his pretty, pretty Sophy, when she used to sing to him so sweetly, he will not have the heart to refuse me.

"I am sure, my dear niece, that you will be glad to hear that I am very happy and fortunate in my last marriage; and moreover, hat at length you have a little cousin born. A beautiful little girl she is, I must say, though to be sure a mother's judgment is apt to be partial. But I really do think if you were to see your little cousin, Agnes, you could not help

being very fond of her, she is so very clever and intelligent, besides being so particularly beautiful, that everybody who sees her takes notice of it. I have called her Martha after myself, and my dear mother, who was your grandmother you know, my dear Agnes. God knows if circumstances will ever enable myself and my truly excellent husband to return to our native land; I fear, indeed, that the chance is a very remote one; but it would be a happy moment for me if I could show you and your dear father my child! Can't you fancy, Agnes, what a pleasure it would be for me? But it is no good to think about it, at least for a great many years yet—so many indeed, that she would no longer be a little child. You too, my dear Agnes, may perhaps be a mother also. If so, you will the better understand my feelings about my darling little girl! I enclose you a lock of its dear little hair, by which you will see that it is as dark as mine, and that already it curls naturally like yours. Though we are so many miles asunder, I hope you will think of me and your little cousin

sometimes; I am sure she will be brought up to think often of you. My excellent husband, who is decidedly a person of the first consideration in the colony, sends his affectionate compliments, and his blessing to you and yours. And with every good wish, my beloved Agnes, for yourself and all who are dear to you,

"I remain,

"Ever and for ever,

"Your most affectionate aunt,

"MARTHA O'DONAGOUGH."

She was in the act of folding this letter, when her husband entered the room. He too had been far from idle, and held in his hand the proof of it.

"I have found the document, my love;" said he, with his smiling mustache. "Here it is—I shall immediately go and show it to everybody I know in the town, and shall tell them that though I am by no means sanguine as to our ever deriving any benefit from the little out-of-the-way bit of property bequeathed by it, I am nevertheless determined that our darl-

ing child shall lose nothing by any folly or indifference of mine. I shall let them all know —the authorities and all—that henceforth, for the sake of the chance it may give my dear ittle one, I shall never call or sign myself by any other name than that of O'Donagough. This is a capital notion of mine, depend upon it, in many ways."

"I really think it is," said his wife, examining the papers he had laid before her. "But good gracious, Major, how very like you have made it look to poor O'Donagough's writing! I do declare I could no more tell them apart than I could fly! How very clever you must be with your pen!"

The Major put his hand before his mouth, caressed his mustache, but said nothing.

"And now read my letter to Mrs. General Hubert, will you, Major, and tell me what you think of it."

"You must leave off calling me Major, my darling,—remember that," said the gentleman.

"That will be difficult at first, my dear," replied the lady; "but I dare say I shall be

perfect enough at it before the time comes for our going to England. But do pray read my letter."

Without further delay he did so, and most cordially expressed his approbation.

"The devil is in it, my Barnaby," said he, giving her a very hearty kiss, "if we cannot between us contrive to sail before the wind. Why, here is a touch that is worthy of old Talleyrand himself; this blessing I mean, that I send them down here in the corner."

"Of course, I did not forget, my dear, that you were the Reverend Mr. O'Donagough, when I introduced you to my family at parting. It won't do to forget that, you know."

"Upon my soul, you are an angel!" he exclaimed; "and I do not believe the whole earth could furnish another woman to suit me as admirably as you do."

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## CHAPTER IV.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE AND NEW ONES—PATERNAL WISDOM, AND MATERNAL FOLLY, AS GENERALLY DISPLAYED IN WELL-REGULATED HOUSEHOLDS—A GOOD-NATURED VENTURE — PROPHETIC WARNINGS DISREGARDED—PARENTAL PRIDE AND PARENTAL HOPES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD—PREPARATIONS FOR A HOMEWARD VOYAGE.

It was at an unusually late breakfast-table, one bright morning, in the very height of the London season, with windows opening upon Berkeley-square, and letting in through their Venetian blinds so rich an odour of mignionette as to make the heat and dust without forgotten, that General Hubert and his lady were discussing the brilliant party of the evening before, when the postman's speaking dissyllabic signal gave notice of the arrival of a letter.

"From aunt Betsy, I am very sure!" exclaimed the lady.

"From your sister, with a few more raptures about Calabria," said the gentleman. Their suspense was not of long duration; the silver salver addressed itself to the fair hands of Agnes, who took from it a letter, bearing most decidedly neither an Italian nor a Devonshire postmark.

"Who in the world is that from?" said General Hubert.

"Heaven knows! It is excessively dirty," replied his wife.

"It is a ship letter," observed the general.

"But the postmark illegible," answered Agnes; and then having, like many other wise people, wasted a little more time in examining the exterior of her despatch than it would probably take to read it, she broke the seal and looked within.

The delicate cheek of Mrs. Hubert was instantly mantled with a bright blush.

"Whoever your correspondent may be, Agnes," said the general, meeting the distressed

expression of her eye with a look of surprise, "he has no reason to complain of your indifference."

"Indifference!" she exclaimed, "no not indifference. But how, Hubert, will you endure, even upon paper, the reappearance of my aunt Barnaby?"

"Your aunt Barnaby?" replied the general with a smile. "Never mind, Agnes, she will not harm us now."

"Oh, thank Heaven!" cried his wife fervently. "If you can bear it so philosophically, Hubert, I shall declare presently that I am lad to hear from her."

"Especially by a very way-worn, distant-dated ship-letter, my love," he replied laughing. "But if the request be not indiscreet, for kindness' sake read it aloud."

She did so, and the general's commentary was far from unfriendly.

"I declare to you, Agnes," said he, "that I am very glad indeed to hear so good an account of her."

"Thank you a thousand times, my own dear

Hubert," said Agnes, stretching out her hand to him. "If you had looked, at sight of this epistle, as I *have* seen you look in days of yore at sight of herself, I should have been—oh! I won't say how unhappy, because, poor foolish woman, what she says is true. She is my own mother's sister, and though—though she is, or at least was, all that I believe you thought her, it would have made me as sorry almost as I could now be for anything that did not absolutely interfere with my own dear *ménage*, had you wished me not to answer it. But you will let me answer it, dear husband, will you not? Poor thing! only fancy her having a child, Hubert, what *will* it be like?"

"Very like herself, I dare say, Agnes," replied General Hubert, laughing; "that is, you know, excepting all this," indicating the well-remembered rouge and ringlets by an expressive flourish of his fingers around his face, "such finished charms cannot appear at once and, indeed, I should not be at all surprised if Miss Martha O'Donagough were to turn out a very bright-eyed little beauty."

"Nay, I trust she will, or my poor aunt will break her heart. I cannot say I have a very distinct recollection of the papa. Have you?"

"Not the least in the world; and yet I shall never forget their *entrée*. How incomparably well your father behaved! I assure you it was a lesson which, I hope, if the good lady were actually to appear before us in person, I should not forget. It was the most gentle and gentlemanly reproof to our beloved aunt Betsy's severity that I ever witnessed; and I am rather proud to confess, Agnes, that notwithstanding my very strong inclination at the time to sympathise with the harsher faction, I felt that he was right then, and have decidedly loved him the better for it ever since."

"If ever there was a perfect—" began Agnes, raising her beautiful eyes to the face of her husband, but the sentiment or opinion she was about to pronounce, was lost to the world for ever by the general's very unceremoniously closing her lips with a kiss.

"We are despicably late this morning," said he, on looking at his watch, after perpetrating

this audacity; "and I must go to the Horse-guards about young Belmont. But let me see my boys first, Agnes."

Whatever emotions the lady might feel on being thus unceremoniously treated, they were not such as to induce her to refuse his request. The proper signal was given, and two young things entered the apartment, one carried in the nurse's arms, and the other doddling before her, whose aspect might really have excused, if anything could, the vehement fanaticism of Mrs. Elizabeth Compton concerning them, as well as some undeniable symptoms of weakness on the part of General Hubert himself. That their mother should be firmly persuaded that no children in any degree approaching within reach of a comparison with them, ever did, or ever could exist, is a circumstance of too constant occurrence to merit an observation. But the little boys were, in truth, very pretty children, and it was no unpardonable vanity which made their mama exclaim, as they entered, "I really should like for aunt Barnaby, Mrs. O'Donagough I mean—I really should like for

her to see them, Hubert. But, perhaps, if her little girl is in another style, she might hardly thank me for showing them to her."

"Silly woman! silly woman!" said the brave general, going on all fours to accept the challenge of his first-born to a game of romps. "Don't you know better than that yet? Why, your sister Nora, thinks her little flaxen-headed dolls quite as handsome as either Montague or Compton."

"You are quite mistaken, I assure you, General Hubert. She neither does nor could think any such thing. The little Stephensons are charming children—beautiful little creatures; but—"

"Good morning, Agnes!" cried her laughing husband, springing up from his station on the carpet. Don't finish the sentence—but just tell me if aunt Barnaby herself could be more preposterous in her estimate of our young Van Dieman's Land cousin, than you are of these young gentlemen?"

"Nonsense, Montague! You don't deserve to look at them. Let Compton alone, if you

please, sir; I do not choose to have his ca taken off. I know how I could revenge myself, General, for your impertinence; I shoul be perfectly justified in shutting your two sons up for a month, where you could by no device obtain a sight of them. How do you think you should bear it, General Montague Hubert?"

"It would be a prodigious relief, my love. Let it be all arranged before I return," said he, kissing his hand as he retreated towards the door.

"Away with you, dull jester!" replied his wife; but ere he had passed the door, she added, "Stay one moment though, and speak seriously, if you can. Have you really no objection to my answering my aunt's letter?"

"Most certainly not. Indeed, I should be sorry if you did not answer it, for it would not be acting like yourself, my Agnes. Answer it by all means, and join my name with yours, in the expression of all civility."

"Then I will write directly. Poor aunt Barnaby! Only think of her sending me this

lock of her baby's hair! I think I must send her a scrap of these bright chestnut ringlets in return," continued the young mother, twisting the silken curls of the eldest boy round her fingers.

"Take care how you use your shears upon that head, dear love!" replied the General, in an accent of considerable alarm.

"Silly man! silly man!" retorted the laughing Agnes. "Don't you know better than that yet?"

"No, seriously, Agnes, jesting apart, I should not like to have you 'cut a monstrous cantle out' of these most dainty tresses, which are as like your own as it is possible for infant tresses to be."

"And that is the reason you would not have them cut? Oh! you false flatterer!" replied his wife.

"Besides, to say the truth," rejoined General Hubert, putting aside her admonitory finger, "I really think, Agnes, you might hit upon something more useful, and therefore probably more welcome, in the way of a dutiful niece-

like offering, than a bit of this newly-spun silk. Your aunt used to love a fine gown. If I were you I would make a shipment to Sydney, of sundry ells of rich satin or velvet, or something of that kind."

"Are you in earnest, Montague? I should really like to do so, very much."

"Indeed I am in earnest. Your father is coming to dine with us to-day. Let him see Mrs. O'Donagough's letter, and I dare say his heart will be moved to comply with her petition about writing, and perhaps to send her a coral and bells for her daughter into the bargain."

* * * * *

After this conversation, it will be readily believed that such a packet was dispatched from Berkeley-square to Sydney, as threw Mrs. O'Donagough (Allen no longer) into a perfect state of ecstasy on receiving it.

"Now, my dear Ma—— O'Donagough, I mean," she exclaimed, with her eyes blazing up again with all the renovated brightness of youth, "Now, what do you think of the chance of our

Martha's presentation? You talk of saving and saving, and scraping a few pounds together, and it is all vastly well as far as it goes, but what will it all amount to in point of advantage to our daughter, compared to her being presented at court by Mrs. General Hubert? I trust, O'Donagough, you are now sensible of the benefit we are likely to derive from the notice and affection of MY family."

"This is an extremely handsome dress, my dear, there is no doubt of it," replied the *ci-devant* Major. "You will look perfectly divine in green velvet! And your brother-in-law, Mr. Willoughby, has really acted with great politeness and attention in sending this handsome frock and coral ornaments for the child. It all speaks well, both for the wealth and good-will of the parties. You must answer these letters punctually, of course, and we may find out some little production of the country that will not cost much, to send in return. I am quite aware, my dear, very perfectly aware I assure you, of the possible value of your connexions. By the way, did not that dashing gay young Stephen-

son, whose fortune they said was a great deal larger than his elder brother's, did not you tell me that he had married another niece of yours?"

"Not exactly a niece, Major." Here her husband seized Mrs. O'Donagough rather suddenly by the wrist, and stopping short her speech, said, "Bad habits are bad things, Mrs. O'Donagough! You *must*, madam, immediately cease your foolish trick, under the circumstances, your incredibly foolish trick, of calling me Major. Don't oblige me to remind you of it again, if you please. It is no child's play we are upon, remember that. I could make up my mind in five minutes, not to care a straw about your stiff-backed cousins from one end of the list to the other; but if I do for the advantage of the child, and to oblige you, if I *do* determine to give myself the trouble of getting amongst them, it must be done in a manly, decided, business-like spirit, and in a style that may hereafter enable me to turn it to account. Mrs. O'Donagough, do you understand me?"

"Yes, to be sure I do," she replied, disengaging her arm by a stout tug. "You need not claw one in that way, I am not a bit more likely to spoil a good scheme than yourself, Mr.—, *alias* O'Donagough."

The *ci-devant* Major looked as black as thunder; he liked not this sportive phrase; it grated painfully on his ear, and it was not till he had twice paced the length of the room, that he felt able to renew the conversation. At length, however, he said, and apparently with recovered good-humour, "This is silly work, my love, squabbling about which of us is capable of carrying on the war with the most skill. I don't believe we should either of us prove deficient if we were fairly tried; and that, it is likely enough we shall be, and on a very handsome scale, too, if we ever really get launched among the people you talk of. I can assure you, my Barnaby, that to a man like me, it is a devilish bore to be kept fiddle-faddling amongst such a set as there are here. Come, let us talk 'em all over a little. First, there's that giant of a General; he is just the sort of man, I take

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it, to make a great bluster beforehand, and then be led by the nose by his wife when she has caught him; so if you contrive to keep well with your niece, he won't be much in the way. Then there's that sort of a wandering Jew of a a man, that you told me such a long story about, Agnes's father; he is come home, isn't he, as rich as a nabob?"

"He did not enter into any particulars, my dear Donny, but he said something about being at last in comfortable circumstances, if I remember rightly. And I am sure no *poor* man could have sent out such a present as he has done to Patty."

"Well then, that's all right. But I'll tell you who it is that I reckon most upon in this affectionate family reunion that you promise me; for the truth is, I remember a little about the young fellow myself—I mean Stephenson, the younger brother, Frederick Stephenson. I happened to know that his fortune was about half as large again as his elder brother's. Didn't he play sometimes? I am almost sure I have heard so."

"I don't know about that, my dear, but it is very likely; almost all men of fashion do,—at least I have heard Miss Morrson say so, over and over. But if you ask, because you think that one of these days you should like to play with him yourself, on account of his being rich, which makes it so easy for him to lose, I'll answer for it there will be no difficulty about that, so intimate as we shall all be together—for I well remember he was the most obliging, good-natured creature in the world. Dear me! I am sure I shall never forget our famous walk to Bristol, when I was obliged to roll myself over and over in the dust, to save my life from that beast. Don't you remember how excessively kind he was, running back to Clifton with Agnes, to get a carriage for me?"

This was the first direct allusion to any of their Clifton adventures which had been made since their marriage, and a perceptible frown agitated the eyebrows of Mr. O'Donagough. His sharp-witted wife smiled aside as she remarked it. She and her husband had been (as we know,) vastly fond lovers; but there is

a process which chemically takes place when "sweets to the sweet" have been incautiously laid together, that renders sour, what, before such too closely pent-up union, had been altogether the reverse; and it occasionally happens in married life, that something analogous to this will occur. Mrs. O'Donagough was still, perhaps, a little on *the fret*, and it was certainly no very *sweet* feeling which caused her to set down on a private leaf of her memory's tablet a N.B., to the effect that she knew how to plague her husband when he deserved it.

At that moment, however she willingly let the subject pass; and, turning again to the copious waves of green velvet which flowed from chair to chair, reiterated her thankfulness, that among all the other good gifts which nature and fortune had bestowed on her, she possessed for a niece a Mrs. General Hubert, who knew so perfectly well how to suit her taste and dimensions in the purchase of a dress!

Of course a corespondence so auspiciously begun, was not permitted to drop by any negli-

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gence on the part of Mrs. O'Donagough; and the same good feeling which produced the first reply from Berkeley-square, continued to dictate many more in the same kind spirit of forgetfulness, as to everything that it was disagreeable to remember. It is certainly possible, that both the General and his sweet wife indulged in this benevolent sort of oblivion the more readily, from feeling a comfortable degree of security as to the continuance of Mrs. O'Donagough's residence abroad. Both knew, though neither of them talked about it, that it was next to impossible any man should have married "the aunt Barnaby" from any other motive than a wish to appropriate her little fortune; it therefore followed, that Mr. O'Donagough was poor, and if so, it was equally certain, that what she possessed would not suffice to permit his leaving the new country where he could "inhabit lax," the paradise of corn and mutton, which spread around him, in order again perhaps to be jostled, while in search of a dinner, in the old one—*ergo*, they would stay where they were. With this per-

suasion to sustain and stimulate their good nature, aided too by the kind-hearted sympathy and co-operation of Mr. Willoughby, they continued for many years to testify their good-will by letters and by gifts, the expectation and reception of which formed the glory of Mrs. O'Donagough's Van Dieman existence, while her letters and presents in return were occasionally the source of very harmless amusement among such as remembered her. Mrs. Elizabeth Compton alone must be excepted; for she ceased not to declare with unvarying pertinacity, and it may be with something of undying bitterness, that the having half the globe between them, was by no means a sufficient security against the possibility of annoyance from such a source, and that nothing short of treating Mrs. Barnaby, as if civilly dead, could suffice to protect them securely from the horrors of a reunion with her. Most Cassandra-like, however, was the fate of the old lady's pungent eloquence. Everybody listened to her with an incredulous smile; and General Hubert seemed even to enjoy the vivid

pictures she sometimes drew of scenes ensuing from the alarming lady's possible return.

"She will not come, aunt Betsy," he said, "but if she should, where would the sting be now? Gone, drawn, and harmless for evermore! Can she divorce us, aunt Betsy? Do you think *that* likely?"

"Agnes, your husband is quite young enough," was the old lady's reply. "I never in all my reading met with a stronger instance of the false reasoning of wrong-headed young love! May Providence keep you from this terrible woman, my dear General!—for it is quite clear you have not wit enough to guard yourself—think if your sufferings from a Barnaby would not be increased tenfold by seeing them shared by YOUR WIFE!"

But General Hubert shook his head, and only laughed at her.

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## CHAPTER V.

PROSPEROUS CONDITION OF MR. ALLEN O'DONAGOUGH —A BREAKING OUT OF FATHERLY AFFECTION— EARLY INDICATIONS OF CHARACTER IN MISS O'DONAGOUGH—RESOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE—AGREEABLE NEWS FROM ENGLAND—PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

YEARS wore away, Mr. Allen O'Donagough, as the good people of Sydney persisted in calling him, derived very essential advantage from the widely boasted, and letter-and-present-proved patronage of such connexions. During the last years of his residence in New South-Wales, he obtained, probably from the consideration this procured him, a place in one of the public offices, the salary of which was its least profit; for it enabled him to import advantageously various articles which he knew how to dispose of, at enormous profit, so that

he became by every day that passed over him, a richer man. The benefits, which this same forgiving kindness on the part of Mrs. Hubert, conferred on her some-time aunt Barnaby, might perhaps be considered as greater still; for (wishing to be on confidential terms with my readers), it must be confessed, that had no such connexions as the Huberts existed in England, it is more than probable that Mr. Allen O'Donagough, notwithstanding his advance in all steady economical financial habits, might still have been tempted to exhibit some immoral laxity of opinion on the subject of marriage. But for the hope that the one of all his professions which he loved the best might be followed on a higher ground than had ever yet been within his reach, through the influence of his charming Barnaby's connexions, it is pretty nearly certain, that when the time arrived at which he deemed it convenient to recross the ocean, he would have found some means or other of leaving his lady and daughter behind him. These roving thoughts, however, gave way as the time approached, to feelings of

a nobler and more ambitious kind. Even Miss Martha O'Donagough, his little daughter, began by degrees to take a stronger hold upon his paternal affections. Whether arising from prolonged habits of celibacy, or a feeling of doubt as to how long their personal intimacy might last, or from any other cause, certain it is, that for the first nine or ten years of the young lady's life, his fatherly tenderness towards her limited itself to chirruppings, while still in the cradle; about one pat on the head per week in the go-cart, and pretty frequent notices that she was not to make a noise afterwards. But a few weeks after the celebration of her tenth birthday, it chanced that a large packet arrived from London. Among other articles, it contained a complete walking-dress for Miss Martha, the bonnet being lined and trimmed, contrary to the usual quiet style of Mrs. Hubert's offerings, with particularly bright rose-coloured satin. The turkey-cock is not more susceptible to the hue of red, than was Mrs. O'Donagough. The instant that this well-packed article was cleared of its

moorings, her rapture at the sight of it became vehement.

"Matrimony has improved Agnes in one thing, that is certain!" she exclaimed. "It is plain that she knows how to choose colours now, whatever she did formerly. I remember when we were at Cheltenham together, that she perfectly pestered me with her recommendations of dull-coloured silks and ribbons. But look at this, O'Donny!" "an affectionate abbreviation this, adopted since the use of "Major" had been abandoned.) "Look at this lovely bonnet, O'Donny, and then fancy how Martha will look in it!"

This enchanting bonnet, by the way, was chosen to gratify a whim of aunt Betsy's. She chanced to be present when the purchase was made, and begged so earnestly that this one might be sent, instead of any of its more delicately-tinted fellows, that her niece consented.

"Thank you, my dear, you have given me pleasure," said the old lady. "It is agreeable to me to paint to my mind's eye the face of a

daughter of Mrs. O'Donagough's, when enlivened by that glowing red—I have almost a mind to pay for it myself, Agnes, that I might have the pleasure of pointing out to you how truly the gift might assume the character of Mercy, by 'blessing her that gives, and her that takes.' Can you not fancy how your aunt Barnaby will look when its glories open upon her?"

And the image which the old lady had just conjured up, was as near as possible to the truth. The *ci-devant* aunt Barnaby did appear to be in a state little short of ecstacy, as she turned and re-turned it upon her clenched fist.

"Let us have her in this very moment, my dear! Do just go out and call her, will you."

"No, my dear, I certainly will not," replied Mr. O'Donagough, deliberately, and at the same time thrusting his arm to the bottom of the box in search of newspapers, or anything else he might chance to find.

"What a brute you do grow into!" retorted his wife. "And if I go myself, how prettily I

shall find all the things rummaged about, shan't I?"

Mr. O'Donagough deigned not to make any reply, but having found two or three newspapers, was either really, or seemingly, entirely absorbed in their contents.

Happily for the preservation of Mrs. O'Donagough's temper, and the continuation of her enjoyment, the young lady in question at this moment entered the room. Her eye instantly caught sight of the rose-coloured ribbons, and every one who had observed her countenance at that time, must have been forcibly struck by its resemblance to that of her mother, although in features perhaps she more resembled her father. The little girl had large wide-opened black eyes, which easily kindled into considerable vehemence of expression. The shape of her face was like that of her father's, which was large and long: her mouth and teeth, however, were those of her mother, of ample dimensions, bright in colour, both as to the white and the red, but having a sort of coarseness in the smile, which might perhaps enhance its beauty

in the judgment of some, while it wholly destroyed it in that of others. The nose again was that of the father's, high, hooked, and threatening to become of a size more advantageous to a male than to a female face. Her hair was dark, and curled naturally and closely, while her complexion was brilliant almost to excess, being literally, and with no allowance made for figures of speech, composed of white and red.

In person she was stout, strong-limbed, and very tall for her age, and on the whole presented an appearance which her mother had the comfort of feeling was very little short of perfection.

"Oh my! what a beautiful bonnet!" exclaimed Miss Martha, darting forward to seize upon it. "It is no good, mama, your holding it up that way out of reach, for it must be mine and nobody else's, because I am certain sure you could not poke your great head into it."

"It is for you, my precious queen," replied her mother; "but it is I must have the joy of

tying it under your beautiful chin. Don't crush the ribbons, darling, for your life!"

With great docility, and manifesting considerable powers of reflection, the child stood still while this operation of tying was performed, and then made an effort to bound from beneath the hands of her mother, in order to view herself in a little glass which hung between the two windows of the apartment.

"Stay one instant, my angel!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Donagough, holding her; "I never did, no never in my whole life, Mr. O'Donagough, see anything one quarter so beautiful as Patty looks in that bonnet! For God's sake, leave the news for one moment to look at her, and tell me how you shall like to show off such a face as that in London!"

Mr. O'Donagough graciously condescended to lift his eyes, and fix them on the little Patty, and for the first time in her life really thought her very well-looking. There is something even at ten years old, in the consciousness of having a large quantity of bright rose-colour reflecting itself upon one's complexion, which,

together with a maternal assurance that one is the most beautiful creature in the world, tends to harmonize the features, and give a very sweet expression to the countenance. Little Patty stood peaceably for a moment, with her hands before her, and her long eyelashes modestly cast down, so that, when unable to resist the longing desire to look at herself for another moment, she bounded away to the further end of the room, her father said, with great feeling,

"Yes! by heaven! I do think she will make a devilish fine girl after all; and it will be a good thing if she does, I can promise you."

"A good thing? I believe so, indeed! Fancy such eyes and complexion as that, with a general's wife for a cousin, to take her out, and I don't know how many ladies of title to talk of, to all her partners and everybody besides! My dear Donny, if we can but contrive to manage our affairs so as to make a tolerable show when we get to England. take my word for it, that girl will make a match that will perfectly astonish you.

I am quite sure of it, perfectly certain. I have seen a great deal of life, and what is of more consequence, I have reflected a great deal on what I have seen. When I talk of Mrs. General Hubert's bringing Martha out, I mean nothing more, I assure you, than the merely taking her to court, and to a few other topping places, where just at first, perhaps, I shan't manage to get invited. But as to everything else, everything that concerns her general introduction among young men of fashion and large estates, I would not accept the services of anybody in the whole kingdom of England!"

During this first burst of conscious excellence from his wife, Mr. O'Donagough continued his assiduous study of the newspapers, and Miss Martha an almost equally assiduous study of her own little person in the glass. The difference between the degrees of intensity with which these occupations were carried on was this—the gentlemen really heard not a single word that was said; whereas the young lady did not lose one.

"I am taller than Kitty Jones, ma," said Miss Martha, standing on tiptoe.

"Yes, yes, my dear! you will be tall enough, and beautiful enough too, you darling angel! Only you must always mind every word I say to you, for else neither beauty or tallness either will do you any good in getting a husband. Now take off the bonnet, Patty. Take it off this instant, when I bid you."

Nevertheless Patty persevered in retaining her station before the glass, first making a pendant bow hang a little on one side, and then trying its ever-charming effect when preponderating on the other. Considering the age of the little girl, it was really curious to watch her; and any observing student of natural history who had done so, would have perceived precisely the same phenomena, which it is so interesting to follow, in the young of all the countless tribes which form the animal creation, from man to a polypus. In each, the leading instinct of the species peeps out as easily, and with the same providential and unerring certainty, as the distinctive peculiarities of its

organic formation; furnishing to a rightly-constituted mind, the most satisfactory proof that each is provided with exactly that sort of acuteness most necessary for its safety and well-being.

But it was not in such subtile reasonings that the intellectual energies of Mrs. O'Donagough exhausted themselves. She marked the more obvious trait of disobedience in little Patty's delay; and, stepping with unexpected suddenness towards her, with one decisive hand removed the bonnet, and with the other bestowed on the offender a very effective box on the ear.

In many respects this promising little girl appeared advanced beyond her age; and one proof of this was her having exchanged the childish scream with which little girls usually indicate their averseness to being cuffed, for an indignant frown, which spoke as great an inclination to cuff again, as it was possible for a young lady to demonstrate to her mama.

This was a great relief to her father and mother; for before this incipient sturdiness of

character appeared, it was by sturdiness of voice that her vigour, both of body and soul, declared itself, often rendering the needful castigations of Mrs. O'Donagough a sort of public nuisance in the street where she lived.

But this was entirely over. Little Martha O'Donagough had cried her last cry for being beat, and now flashed her great eyes at her mother in a style that clearly foretold what their powers would be hereafter.

But, though Patty did not scream, the concussion roused the attention of her papa.

"What's that for, ma'am?" he said hastily, and thereby for the first time evincing such an inclination to take the part of his daughter, against his wife, as showed that the little lady's good looks in her new bonnet had produced a very powerful effect upon his mind.

"Put on the bonnet again, Mrs. O'Donagough," said he; "she looked exceedingly well in it, and I want to see it again."

It was impossible that the anger, either of mother or daughter, could resist this novel and very pleasing ebullition of paternal admiration;

they both recovered their good-humour instantly; the bonnet was again tried on, again did little Patty "look beautiful with all her might," and a general feeling throughout the family of that beneficent arrangement of nature which binds a whole race together, let distance separate them ever so widely, caused the father to say, addressing his wife,

"Well, old girl! I won't deny that nieces and nephews are good for something." While she rejoined,

"You may depend upon it, Donny, that blood is always thicker than water," and the youthful Martha completed the accord by exclaiming,

"I am sure as I should like the people as sent this bonnet, better than anybody else in the whole world!"

From that day forward Mr. Allen O'Donagough continued to demonstrate a very marked degree of attachment to his young daughter. He even in some degree exerted himself to cultivate her mind, and improve her manners. Not, indeed, that he, at any time, submitted

himself to the drudgery of giving regular lessons; such an attempt would have been altogether inconsistent with his habits, whether of pleasure, or of business. But, apparently, he knew the value of that best mode of education, which consists in the constant and gradual inoculation of a parent's principles and opinions into the mind of a child; and, as far as it was possible to judge of one so young, the result of this system in the case of Miss O'Donagough, confirmed its often-attested efficacy most completely; for in mind, as well as in body, she bore a blended resemblance to both her parents.

The last year of their long residence in New South Wales passed rapidly, for its term seemed within reasonable reach of hope and expectation. The bringing to a settlement and close all Mr. O'Donagough's very profitable speculations, left him little leisure for idle repinings that the desired hour did not approach more quickly; and the pushing forward the ornamental part of their daughter's education, as completely occupied his wife. Both

parents were anxious to take advantage of her premature height, and womanly appearance, in order to introduce her in the very first opening blossom of beauty.

"She is but thirteen and a bit, Donny," said Mrs. Donagough to her husband, one evening that they were sitting *tête-à-tête* before retiring for the night; "I know that as well as any one can tell me; but I'm not going to let her pass for a child, for all that. There are some mothers of my age, and looking as I do, who would see her a nun before they'd make themselves older than needs must, by seeming to have a grown-up daughter. But I'm above any such nonsense. There is nothing to be got by it now, whatever there might be if I was to happen to be left a widow again, and, therefore, I'm quite determined that Patty shall be dressed at once like a young woman."

"I shall not make any objection to that, I promise you," replied her husband. "She is a most uncommonly fine girl—just the right sort, full of spirit and cleverness. Not that

I'll promise you, Mrs. O'D., to marry her to the first man that asks. If she turns out as I expect, it will answer a great deal better to let her take time."

Mrs. O'Donagough was about to make a somewhat lively reply, but checked herself, wisely remembering, that if a good match offered, she and Patty between them could manage matters easy enough, let all the fathers in the world do what they would to prevent them.

And now the last busy month arrived, and fatiguing enough was the work they had to go through, in selling to the best profit all that was to be left behind, and packing in the least space all they intended to carry with them. In the midst of all this bustle, however, Miss Patty found the way to escape from doing anything she did not like, and having somewhat wilfully spoilt every article upon which her mother had attempted to employ her young fingers, she was permitted to escape from amidst the hampers and boxes which filled the house, in order to enjoy some farewell gossiping with the young Sheepshanks, and make their

hearts ache by the lively contrast she set before them, between their prospects and her own.

It was during her absence that the last English newspapers they were likely to see before they left Sydney, arrived. Notwithstanding the bustle he was in, Mr. O'Donagough set himself down upon the corner of a trunk, while, with his usual eagerness in the perusal, he began to run through the interesting columns. His lady, meanwhile, occupied at the other end of the room in carefully packing the stores which were to console them on their voyage, hardly lifted her eyes from the huge hamper she was filling, but with exemplary perseverance, went on, adding pickle-pot to pickle-pot, and sweetmeat-jar to sweetmeat-jar, without ever pausing to ask if there were any news.

She was presently rewarded, however, by her husband crying out, "My Barnaby!—our plottings prosper! The father of O'Donagough is dead. That old fellow was positively the only person living of whom I was much afraid.

I can now undertake to prevent man, woman, or child, from recognising me against my inclination; and may snap my fingers, for instance, at the idea of any of your kith or kin remembering that they had ever seen me before. But I did not feel so sure, nor anything like it, about that old man's natural affection, as folks call it. It is a weight off my mind, I promise you."

"It's all the better, there's no doubt of that," replied his wife, pushing lustily, to insinuate a salted tongue between two choice specimens of Sydney cheese; "but with your cleverness, I can't say I should have been much afraid either of the old lord or of any one else."

"Thank you, my dear, for your good opinion; and perhaps you are not much out either. But I will tell you what this news will make me do, which I should not have ventured upon without. I shall always call myself, for the future, Allen O'Donagough. If anything unaccountable *did* happen, it might serve to prove that I did not pass under a false name;

not to mention that there may be more than one of the Sydney folks who may have need to write to me about sundry little matters of merchandise, which I cannot quite give up as yet, and they will infallibly address me under that name."

"But don't you think, my dear, that Agnes and her proud husband, and my sister Peters and her family, if we should ever fall in with them, would be very likely, if they saw you, and heard your name at the same time, to let one remind them of the other somehow?" said Mrs. O'Donagough, who, in that quarter, at least, was fully as anxious as her husband that he should not be recognised.

"They may be reminded of me, my dear Mrs. O'Donagough, without knowing me," was the reply; and as it was spoken with one of those peculiar smiles which she often saw on the face of her husband, and always with the feeling that they meant more than she could understand, she turned again her undivided attention to the packing, and by dint of her great exertion and perseverance, found herself

on the wharf from whence they were to take their departure, with her husband on one side, her daughter on the other, and not a single packet either missing or forgotten.

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## CHAPTER VI.

SORROWS OF THE SEA—COMFORT AND CONSOLATIONS—BAFFLED HOPES AND NATURAL INDIGNATION—YOUNG LOVE.

NOTWITHSTANDING that the wind was favourable, the vessel seaworthy, the crew civil, and, better than all, the land towards which they were making such rapid way, the very land of promise and of hope, Mrs. O'Donagough and Miss O'Donagough too, were, to use a poet's phrase, "very, very sick." That they should be very, very cross too, was, on the whole, quite excusable, because it is certain that under the influence of the first feeling, everything in heaven and on earth, and the water under the earth, is sure to generate the last.

Mr. Allen O'Donagough, who was totally unconscious of any sensation of the kind, was

very civil to his wife, and attentive to his daughter for about half an hour after the malady seized them; but he then became weary of the repetition of attitude, and so on, which was quite unavoidable on the part of the ladies, but certainly uninteresting, to say the least of it, to everybody else; and he therefore took himself off to the very furthest extremity of the ship from that occupied by the suffering womankind, and there comfortably seated on a chicken-coop, with a cigar in his mouth, he dozed in luxury, half meditating, and half dreaming of Crockford's.

Poor Mrs. O'Donagough was greatly to be pitied during nearly the whole of the voyage. It was so provoking to see the pickles and the sweetmeats, over the preparation and the packing of which she had toiled, gradually melting before her eyes, without her having ever been able, for a single moment, to venture them within her mouth! Miss Patty, however, got much better before she had been long at sea, and might soon be seen climbing up upon the taffrail, partly to receive the favouring breeze

upon her face, and partly, perhaps, for the purpose of making some of the young sailors come and tell her that she must take care not to tumble overboard, and let the fishes pick out her pretty eyes.

Among the crew of the Atalanta (which was the name of the fine merchant-ship that bore the Allen O'Donagoughs across the ocean), was a lad apparently about nineteen or twenty years of age, who very soon attracted the particular attention of Miss Patty; nay, even Mrs. Allen O'Donagough, in her intervals of convalescence, more than once honoured him by a stare, that decidedly spoke of admiration.

This youth's universal appellative was "Jack," and, to judge by the multitude of occasions in every day, upon which the name resounded from stem to stern, he was a person of very considerable importance in the manœuvring of the vessel. This circumstance taken singly, spoke well for the skill and nautical superiority of the boy; yet there were other circumstances which might have led those who watched him closely to doubt whether he were

indeed so very accomplished a sailor. For, in the first place, nobody ever saw him go aloft; and though, as we have said, he was continually called upon by name, more particularly by the sailors than the officers of the ship, whenever they were in want of a hand, it not unfrequently happened, when he obeyed the summons and set to work upon the business assigned him, a roar of laughter from his companions accompanied and followed his exertions. This, however, might have proceeded solely from his great popularity among them, and from the very particular pleasure they all appeared to take in his society.

He was unquestionably one of those happy mortals, blessed by nature with the patent privilege of propitiating the good will of all on whom he turned his bright blue eye. There was no resisting its gay playful glance, nor the smile either, by which he displayed the most perfect set of teeth ever set in a mortal head, almost every time he was spoken to.

It is a long voyage from New South Wales to England; and even those who are best in

health, and gayest in spirits, can hardly fail to experience that degree of weariness, which makes every person, and every occurrence within reach of observation, important. Mr. Allen O'Donagough himself, though fully enjoying those best reliefs to tedium, the breakfasts, dinners, and suppers furnished by the careful preparations of his less happy spouse, so far shared this universal feeling as to amuse himself occasionally by joining with Jack in his good-humoured efforts to amuse Patty.

No sooner was the breakfast hour passed, than the young lady, let the weather be what it would, was sure to be seen climbing the cabin-stairs, in order to get a game at ship-billiards with Jack. Nor was Jack slow in his efforts to meet her wishes. No sooner did he perceive her bright eyes roving about the deck in search of him, than he sung out to any of the crew who happened to be within reach, "Avast there, Tom!" or Dick, or Harry, or whomever else it might chance to be, "Avast there! and hand us a bit of chalk for the young lady." And a bit of chalk, to mark the series

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*Miss Martha becomes enamoured of Ship billiards & of Jack.*

of circles that the game required, was never long waited for; nay, so eager were the good seamen of the Atalanta to oblige either the young lady or their blithe comrade, that few among them failed, when thus called upon, to use the chalk as well as furnish it; and the ring within ring was often fairly drawn upon the deck, each marked with its respective number, and the circular slices of wood that served as bowls, placed ready beside them, before Jack had concluded his first parley with Miss Patty, or answered half the questions respecting wind, weather, the ship's progress, and the flying fish, which she always came ready primed to ask.

As soon as the game was fairly begun, Mr. Allen O'Donagough might generally be seen approaching, cigar in mouth, to watch the progress of it. Had he carefully marked the expression of his young daughter's countenance as he drew near, he might perhaps have perceived that she would have been quite as well pleased to keep Jack and the bowls to herself; but probably he did not mark it at all, and

accordingly obtruded himself without scruple upon their game, generally proposing to set himself and his daughter against Jack, who was a great adept, and often appearing to take the most lively interest in the result.

By means of this constant practice, Mr. Allen O'Donagough himself acquired by degrees very considerable skill in the game, and at length was apt to leave poor Patty out of it altogether, till the amusement was evidently become as important to his daily existence as to hers.

It was not long ere Mr. Allen O'Donagough's habit of bringing all his intellect to bear upon every game, whether of skill or chance, in which he was engaged, placed him fully on an equality with Jack in that of ship-billiards; and then he began greatly to long for a bet to excite anew the interest. A feeling, pretty nearly allied to shame, enabled him for a few days to resist the temptation he felt to challenge Jack for a penny a game; but it lasted no longer, and setting all considerations of his own superior rank aside, he fairly addressed the lad in the language of perfect equality:—"I say Jack!

what do you say, my boy, to our trying our luck for a penny a game?"

"With all my heart, sir, if you will," was the reply, and to it they set, notwithstanding the openly-expressed displeasure of Patty, who was fain to console herself by standing very close to her favourite when it was her father's turn to throw, and by romping with him a little now and then for the recovery of the bowl, when both stooped together to pick it up.

Mr. Allen O'Donagough was unquestionably much too rich a man to make the pennies for which he now played, of importance to him; nevertheless, habit, and a sort of instinctive ardour for success, even where success mattered not, led him to exert himself so effectually, that he speedily became the better player of the two. This appeared to pique the young sailor, and he likewise was frequently seen practising the game alone. At these times no one ever heard "Jack" called for, nor did any of the necessary duties of his profession appear in the least degree to interfere with his amusement. Poor sick Mrs. O'Donagough, whose

greatest comfort was to have a parcel of coats and cloaks placed on the deck for her to lie upon, frequently amused herself by the hour together in watching both the practice and the game also, till at last it struck her that Jack, who, making allowance for his youth, and his wearing neither favoris or mustaches, she considered as decidedly the handsomest person she had ever seen—it struck her, I say, that Jack must either be the very idlest fellow that ever took service on shipboard; or, that he was not the mere common sailor he appeared.

No sooner had this last conjecture crossed her brain, than her curiosity became roused, and exerting herself vigorously, she rose from her recumbent posture, and dragged her languid limbs to the spot where Captain Wilkins, the commander of the vessel, stood leaning listlessly over the ship's side.

Mrs. Allen O'Donagough leant over the ship's side too. "Good morning to you, captain," said she, turning up her veil that she might both hear and see him more at her ease. "How are we getting on to-day?"

"Capital well, ma'am," he replied, "eight knots an hour, steady."

"That's good hearing, Captain Wilkins, for one that makes such a bad sailor as I do.—And talking of sailors, do tell me something about that young man that they call Jack. I never saw such an odd, irregular young fellow in my life. Sometimes to hear the sailors calling him, first here, then there, as violently as if the whole safety of the ship depended on his coming, one might think he was just the best seaman on board. Then at other times he will do nothing but amuse himself for hours and hours together with tossing along that bit of wood, as he is doing now. Do turn round and look at him, Captain Wilkins, and tell me if that's the way for a sailor to earn his wages?"

The captain turned his head for a moment to look in the direction Mrs. O'Donagough indicated, and then replacing himself in his former position, replied carelessly,—

"It is only because we go on so well, ma'am. Sailors have but little to do in fair weather."

"Humph!" quoth Mrs. Allen O'Donagough,

seemingly but little satisfied by the explanation; but replacing her folded arms upon the side of the vessel she contemplated the floating nautili, shining with their violet and silver rigging in the sun, as fixedly as if she were really thinking of them; but it was no such thing; her thoughts had never swerved for a moment from Jack. His handsome face, and his tall slight figure, which, spite of his canvass trousers and checked shirt, had an air, a look, that seemed so—she was quite at a loss for a word to express what she meant, but had she been blessed with her friend Miss Morrison's familiarity with the tongues, she would unquestionably have added "*destengay*." And then all the sailors, though they called him Jack so familiarly, doing just what he bid them with the chalk every day, and more than all, his flying full gallop to handle a rope now and then, just as if it was done for fun, though as to scouring the decks, or climbing up those horrid dangerous ladders of rope, or any other sailor work, that was anywise disagreeable, he no more seemed to have a notion of doing

it than her daughter Martha. All this was puzzling in the extreme, and understand it she would, or else know the reason why.

"But I say, captain," she began again, but turning her head a little at the same moment, she perceived that, most uncourteously, Captain Wilkins had left her side, and was no longer in sight.

"Vulgar brute!" murmured Mrs. O'Donagough in great indignation. "But if he is off, because he won't tell me what I want to know, I'll be a match for him yet."

On first screwing her courage to this enterprise of further inquiry, she turned her eyes towards the head of the vessel as the point where she was at once the most certain of encountering some of the men, and of not encountering their captain. But, poor soul! the undertaking was greatly beyond her strength, and after making a few tottering steps in the direction she wished to take, she was fain to stop short, and seat herself.

But though her walk before the mast was given up, her inquisitorial project was not;

and as soon as she had rested herself sufficiently once more to give her poor reeling brain fair play, she bethought her of a scheme worth a dozen of the last, and forthwith proceeded to put it in execution. No manœuvring was required for this, in any degree at variance with her feeble condition, for it was only necessary that she should confess herself to be as ill as she really felt, and call for the steward to help her down stairs to her berth. Black Billy came at her call, and with his usual ready civility sustained the weight of the lady's heavy arm till he had safely landed her in the cabin.

Black Billy was an excellent steward, and to all the multitudinous qualifications essentially necessary to deserving this character, he added a charm, without which all the rest would have been imperfect—for Black Billy was a most accomplished gossip.

"Thank you, Billy! thank you!" sighed the qualmish lady, as soon as she had placed her uncomfortable person on the black horsehair sofa. "But don't go away yet, Billy! I want to give you half a dollar, because you are

always so good-natured to my daughter and me."

"Tanky mam," returned Billy, his eyes flashing at sight of the dearly-loved coin. "Madam want itty drop som'at goody goody?"

"Why, I shouldn't care, Billy, if I did have half a glass of very, *very* weak cold rum-and-water."

Billy was rattling amongst his bottles and glasses in a moment; and presently, returning from the mysterious hole in which all the *matériel* for his important office was lodged, he presented the *goody goody* draught to Mrs. O'Donagough, with an air that would not have disgraced the *chef* of Verey's establishment.

"Thank you, Billy, thank you!" reiterated the kind-spoken lady, adding, after a sip or two, "It is very comfortable indeed! But don't go, Billy; you shall have the glass in one moment, and then there will be no danger of its getting broke."

Billy obediently stationed himself before her, and respectfully waited, plate in hand, to receive her glass.

But Mrs. O'Donagough was in no humour to dispatch its reviving contents hastily. "You make the best toddy I ever tasted, Billy. I am sure you are quite a treasure to the ship. How long have you been on board her, Billy?"

"Dis is de fust woyage, please mam."

"You seem to have a nice civil crew on board, Billy."

"Yes, please mam; all but nasty filty negur cook; and we must put up wid he, mam, 'cause you know he be but a beastly negur."

"That Jack, as you call him, seems a good-natured lad, with always a merry word for everybody. Do you know anything about him, Billy?" resumed the lady.

"Oh! es, mam," replied Billy, with a very broad grin, "I knows all about em."

"Do you, Billy?" replied Mrs. O'Donagough, eagerly; "I am very glad of it, for I want to hear all about him. Who is he, Billy? And what is he? Something out of the common way I think; ins't he now, Billy?"

This was said in the playful coaxing tone,

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Mrs. Allen's unsuccessful attempt to wheedle the secret from Billy.

generally used by people who pique themselves upon their powers of cross-examination.

Billy upon this lowered his voice to a very confidential tone, as he replied; "Now beant he a rum un, mam? He be de oldest boy ebber come aboard, as couldn't go aloft."

"But *why* can he not go aloft, Billy? that looks as if he had never been bred as a sailor; doesn't it?"

Billy shook his head, but said nothing.

"Now *do* tell me, Billy, you must know," continued Mrs. O'Donagough, "*why* did he come aboard dressed like a sailor?"

"Jack, stupy lubber, wery stupy lubber, mam," said Billy, looking extremely sagacious.

"Yes, yes, Billy, so he is perhaps, and something besides that into the bargain."

"Es, mam, es," replied Billy, putting his finger to his nose, "so he bees."

Mrs. Allen O'Donagough now thought the moment was come; and throwing herself forward on her seat, and raising her eager eyes to the face of the negro, she exclaimed, "What? dear Billy! for God's sake tell me what?"

A very comic expression took possession of the shining face that was bent down to meet hers: but, though the fellow grinned from ear to ear, it was with a tone of great solemnity that he replied, "That bees a secret, mam!"

"Poh! fiddle-de-de for a secret, Billy, among friends; tell me what it is, there's a good fellow."

Billy grinned again, shut up his eyes very close for about half a minute, and then said, "Him bees a reg'lar crocodile."

"A crocodile, you black fool!" cried Mrs. O'Donagough, losing all patience, "if you think to treat a white lady passenger in that manner, and not get flogged for it, you are altogether out. If you don't tell me this moment all you know about that boy who they call Jack, I'll inform the captain that your behaviour is too impertinent to be borne, and we'll soon see what comes of that, master Billy."

Billy tried to look dismal, but his ivory teeth would make themselves seen in spite of him. However, he very soberly took up the glass.

which the lady had just before set down empty, and very decorously named the number of pennies she was to be pleased to pay for the same. This she knew was inevitable, such being the regulation on board the good ship Atalanta. Fortunately for her feelings, at the moment Mrs. O'Donagough chanced to have the exact sum ready in her pocket, in large copper coin, and drawing the pieces out, she raised her arm, and, with all the strength she had, flung them, with a tolerably steady aim, in the face of Billy.

Insult to a negro, if the tortured flesh quiver not beneath it, is never very deeply felt; so Billy only shook his woolly sconce as if it had been exposed to a shower of hail, and without any symptom of ill humour, picked up the coin and retired.

Mrs. O'Donagough felt very ill, very ill indeed. A violent fit of anger is one of the worst accidents that can occur in a case of sea-sickness. It was quite as much as the poor lady could do to get to the state corner, (for the best arranged merchant-ships can hardly be

said to have state cabins,) in which her berth was constructed; and having reached it, there she remained, quietly enough, for at least three hours; the latter part of which time, however, was, happily for her, relieved by a tolerably sound nap,—the greatest blessing that kind Heaven can send to a sufferer in her condition.

She awakened from it greatly refreshed, and sufficiently herself again, to slip off her bed, arrange her ruffled garments, add to her dress a wrapping shawl that she knew gave her an air of dignity, and then, with her parasol in hand, she mounted the companion-way in search of the Captain. She found him standing with his arms behind him, still watching Mr. O'Donagough and Jack at their everlasting game; while Miss Patty, as usual, was consoling herself for her exclusion from it, by following Jack's every movement with her eyes, and endeavouring with all her might to make him cheat her papa.

It might be presumed from external symptoms, that every emotion of anger disagreed very violently with the sensitive frame of Mrs.

O'Donagough; for it invariably caused an appearance of swelling over her whole person, and she now approached the group, who were amusing themselves on the quarter-deck, with a gait and movement, nearly resembling those of a stately turkey-cock, when some circumstance has in like manner ruffled his plumage and his temper.

Mrs. O'Donagough had not lost flesh during her residence in New South Wales: on the contrary, indeed, the greatest change which her appearance had undergone during the fifteen years of her absence from her native shores, arose from the general enlargement of her person, and there was now, therefore, something exceedingly striking and impressive in her aspect when under the influence of any indignant feeling.

Mr. Allen O'Donagough of course knew these symptoms well, and adopting his usual demeanour upon such occasions, appeared, instead of seeing her half as big again as usual, not to see her at all. But he need not have given himself the trouble of feigning, for he had nothing what-

ever to do with her present emotion, while the Captain, who had continued to stand innocently unsuspicious, and without taking the least care of himself, within reach of her arm, was the sole object of her attention.

It was gently, however, that she extended that arm, and laid hold of his. "Captain Wilkins," said she, in a tone of voice which, notwithstanding her inward agitation, was more than usually civil; "Captain Wilkins, will you be so kind as to let me speak to you for half a moment?"

Though a very good sort of fellow in many ways, Captain Wilkins had less of that devoted and undiscriminating gallantry to the fair sex, which is usually found in men of his profession, than Mrs. O'Donagough could have wished; she was quite aware of this, and did not scruple to confess to any body who would listen to her, that Captain Wilkins was no particular favourite of hers. The Captain, on his side, might have been aware of this also, or he might not; but be that as it may, he did not like Mrs. O'Donagough at all: and when, soon after they set

sail, the first mate remarked to him that he thought Madam O'Donagough would still be a capital fine woman, if she was not so unaccountable big, the Captain replied, "There's no accounting for taste, Mr. Hepperton, but to my fancy, she is altogether the most sprawling pattern of a female that I ever looked at on sea or land."

When, therefore, he felt Mrs. O'Donagough's gentle touch, and heard her invitation to a *tête-à-tête*, he looked as if he would not have been at all sorry if his more easily pleased first mate could have taken the duty instead of him. However, he was much too civil to say so, and bending his head with something between a nod and a bow, replied, "At your pleasure, ma'am."

"I must detain you one instant, sir," said the lady, hastening towards the retirement offered by a seat on the opposite side of the quarter-deck; "just sit down here one moment, and you shall hear quietly what I have got to say."

"I prefer standing, ma'am, I thank ye," replied the Captain, placing himself before her at the distance of about five feet.

"Dear me, Captain! I don't want to bawl out so that the whole ship's crew shall hear me, and I shan't poison you, I suppose, if you do come a little nearer."

Upon this, Captain Wilkins made a step, but not a very long one, in advance, and again placed himself in act to hear. Mrs. O'Donagough felt as if she should have liked to throw him overboard; but this did not prevent her again addressing him in a very civil, and almost in a coaxing tone, as she said, "My dear Captain Wilkins, I think it is my bounden duty not to keep you in the dark respecting the extraordinary impertinence of your black steward. I am quite sure, sir, that were you aware of it, you would take instant measures to prevent anything of the kind from ever occurring again; and therefore it is that I make this point of speaking to you. Is it your wish, sir, that your black negro-servant should insult your passengers, your lady passengers, Captain Wilkins?"

Now, the truth was, that during Mrs. O'Donagough's refreshing slumber, Black Billy had been beforehand with her, and recorded to his

master the whole scene which had passed between them; a statement in which the Captain, without any undue partiality towards his steward, felt entire confidence, both from his knowledge of the parties, and from all the circumstances connected with Mrs. O'Donagough's curiosity, and Billy's resistance to it.

However, his answer betrayed nothing of all this, for he only replied, "Oh! no, ma'am, neither black nor white, we must have no insultings."

"You had better not, sir, I can tell you, as far as regards myself. I presume that you are in some degree aware, though not so much as you might be, perhaps, that my daughter and myself are not to be looked upon at all in the same light as any other person on board; nor my husband, Mr. O'Donagough, either, of course. My family and connexions, sir, fill the very highest rank in English society, and a young lady who is going home, I may say for the express purpose of being presented at Court, is hardly to be considered as the same sort of thing as a Sydney grazier's wife, or the daughter

of a felon consigned to her cousins in England, like that flaunting Miss that is always trying to parade the decks with Miss O'Donagough, only I won't let her."

"As to that, madam," replied the Captain, "I never in my life was guilty of making any difference whatsoever between one passenger and another; if they all pay me honestly, they are all honest people to me, and I care not a straw about their grandfathers."

"I have not asked you, sir, to make any difference; any lady, treated as I have been by an insolent blackamoor, ought to know that he was punished for it."

"And what, if you please, madam, do you think I ought to do to Black Billy, for not answering your questions about the young fellows of my crew?"

This sudden and unexpected retort, again made Mrs. O'Donagough feel very unwell, and she heartily wished herself lying upon the cloaks and coats again; nevertheless her spirits did not desert her entirely, and she continued to say, "Upon my word, Captain Wilkins, you

would consult your own interest better if you *did* take a little notice of the difference of station between one passenger and another, instead of treating them all alike, with the vulgarity that seems natural to you."

"My interest, madam, is not very likely to be touched, one way or another, by my passengers. The Atalanta is nowise like an American liner or a steam-ship moving between Dover and Calais; for you know, madam, if any of my customers *was* to cross back again, it would most likely be the King, God bless him! and not me, who would have the bringing of them."

Here Mrs. O'Donagough became too ill to hear another word, and catching hold of a sailor who was passing, to take his turn at the helm, she got him to help her down stairs; when, crawling again into her berth, she continued to lie there in no very comfortable condition for several hours, till at length Miss Patty came to look after her, and by the help of a little coaxing, induced her to get up and show papa in which package the other jars of pickled onions could be found.

For the rest of the voyage Mrs. O'Donagough continued on very unsatisfactory terms both with the Captain and Billy, seldom indeed exchanging a word with either, and remaining altogether too sick and too much out of temper to make any further efforts for the discovery of Jack's secret history, if any such were in truth attached to him; a point upon which, happily perhaps for her own tranquillity, she began to be considerably less sanguine than when her researches commenced; for the youth satisfactorily proved his plebeian origin, by never appearing conscious that so distinguished a person as herself was on board.

"How can you bear to play every day with that vulgar boy as you do? you, and your father too, Martha! It is perfectly wonderful to me how you can endure his manners! But any amusement, I suppose, is better than none, as long as we are confined to this beastly horrid ship. Only you must remember, my dear, that when you get to England, all things will be different. We must have no more vulgar acquaintance, if you please. But now you

must go on playing, I suppose, with any body you can find, for God knows I am too ill to amuse you myself."

Such was the harangue uttered by Mrs. O'Donagough to her daughter when their voyage was about half completed; and to avoid all unnecessary concealments, the soliloquy which followed it on the part of the young lady, as she turned from her mother and hung over the blue waves as they lashed the vessel on her course, shall be given likewise.

"Vulgar boy!—That's your notion of a vulgar boy, is it?—I don't care whether he is a sailor-boy or a prince—*not—one—single—cent.*" It was thus that she deliberately murmured forth her steadfast mind. "But this I know, that if my dear, dear, beautiful, lovely Jack, will only consent to marry me as soon as I am fifteen—and that's old enough for any woman—if he will only have me for his wife, I won't care neither for father nor mother, nor uncles nor aunts, no more than if they were just so many brass buttons."

Such were the sentiments of Mr. Allen

O'Donagough's heiress when she had traversed half the briny space which divides the old world from the new; and ere the remaining half was halved, her young heart was more thoroughly devoted still. But as the adventure which led to this is perfectly novel and highly interesting, it must have a chapter to itself.

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## CHAPTER VII.

A ROMANTIC ADVENTURE WHICH DOES NOW AND THEN OCCUR AT SEA—ITS SENTIMENTAL CONSEQUENCES—MR. ALLEN O'DONAGOUGH SHAVES HIMSELF—A DISCOVERY, BUT ATTENDED WITH NO RELIEF TO CURIOSITY—A FAREWELL.

It happened one morning after rather a squally night, that the youngest boy on board having been sent out to the extremest point of the bowsprit, for the purpose of setting to rights something that the blustering wind had made wrong, became so entangled in the tackle, and by his own unskilful attempts to set it right, as to become too thoroughly puzzled to handle it in the usual way; when, taking an unsailor-like hold of some rope or other, it failed him—he lost his head and his footing together, and with the piercing cry of a shrill

young voice, that made itself heard athwart the hoarse grumbling of the fretted sea, dropped into the water.

Happily the vessel was upon a tack, and did not pass over him: so that Jack, who heard the cry, and sprung instantly to the ship's side, saw the body rise at the distance of a few feet from him. It is not by the result of that valuable process of mind called meditation, that great deeds are done by men or boys either. Had Jack meditated, he would have remembered that he was by no means a very skilful swimmer, and probably come to the conclusion that it would be unwise to put two human lives in jeopardy instead of one; but as he did not meditate at all, an impulse which, if not better was decidedly stronger than reason, caused him to jump upon the bulwarks, and plunge into the sea after him.

In an instant, three-fourths of the crew were hanging over the ship's side, and eagerly handling ropes to throw after him. The Captain, who had been among the first to see both the accident and the bold deed which followed,

could hardly have been more zealous in his efforts to rescue the lads, if either or both of them had been his own. With his own arm he seized the helm, and put the ship about so skilfully, as to bring her within a few feet of poor Jack, who was evidently struggling with difficulty to sustain the boy whom he had succeeded in catching hold of, while with his other arm he laboured to approach and seize upon the friendly rope that had been sent to help him. But the joint action of the wind and waves made this very difficult, and had not the Captain's first order, which was to lower the boat, been promptly obeyed, Jack would never have puzzled or pleased fair lady more.

As it was, however, the adventure ended in the very best style; the young hero and his *protégé* were both laid safely, though perfectly insensible, upon the deck, with all the passengers, and nearly the whole crew, gazing upon them with all sorts of affectionate and admiring looks.

But beyond all question, the person most acutely interested in the scene, was Miss

Martha O'Donagough. Like all other good female sailors, this young lady had a strong aversion to remaining below, and no sooner had the wind sufficiently abated to permit her to keep her feet upon the deck, than coaxing the Captain to withdraw, for her at least, his prohibition against the appearance of the ladies in rough weather, she contrived to make her way to the side of the vessel, and, rolling herself up in her cloak, with a firm grasp upon the bulwarks, to enjoy the fresh breeze after a very sorry night, together with the pleasant hope that her friend Jack would presently see and approach her.

Nor was she disappointed; Jack did see her, and the next moment came laughing to her side, declaring that she must be a mermaid, to look so well and happy in such weather. Then followed some delightful fun in watching the frolics of the tempest-loving tribes, who never condescend to visit the surface of the water when it is smooth; and then Jack helped to secure her bonnet more comfortably by putting a silk handkerchief over it, and tying

it under her chin; and then her cloak wanted fastening, and very often she was in danger of being blown backwards, only Jack was so kind as to prevent it. In short, Miss Martha was enjoying herself exceedingly, when the cry of the falling boy smote their ears. The violent movement occasioned by putting about the ship, which she had to endure without any arm to help her, threw her down, and prevented her seeing either the floating body of the boy, or the noble effort made by her companion to save him. But no sooner had she recovered her feet, and her hold upon the bulwarks, to which she firmly clung, notwithstanding the requests of many sailors that she would stand aside, that she perceived all that had happened, and from that moment ceased not to harass all around her by a succession of screams, till the boat and the three men let down in her, had done their work, and the two rescued lads were stretched before her on the deck. Then she screamed no more; friendship claimed its rights, and undeterred by any idle scruples, Martha sat down upon the deck, and placed the head of poor Jack upon her knee.

"Avast, my girl!" cried one of the men whose exertions had saved him, "he must not be stifled up that fashion." But the cruel interference was of no avail, for at that very moment, Jack opened his bright eyes, and began very hopefully to look about him.

For a moment he seemed puzzled; and the first symptom of recovered memory, was a short, quick, question of "Where is the boy?"

"Here, Jack, here!" responded from all sides; and the next feeling led, as it seemed, to a momentary communing within, for he put his hands before his eyes, and his lips moved, but without his uttering any sound.

Some movement of the young girl then caused him to look up, and he perceived where and how he was situated.

"My dear little girl, is that you?" said he, in a voice that spoke much grateful feeling.

A jovial laugh, and something very like a cheer from the surrounding group, at once seemed to welcome their favourite back to life, and to compliment the young lady upon her kindness. Jack, at the same moment, made an

effort to rise, and Martha did the same; so they stood up together, both dripping wet with the sea-water, and as neither Mr. nor Mrs. O'Donagough had yet left their beds, the Captain took it upon himself to recommend that their daughter should go below and change her wet garments.

This tall, stout, and decidedly precocious young lady, certainly never looked so nearly beautiful as she did at that moment. Much paler than usual, with large black eyes that shone through genuine tears (for she had truly been most terribly frightened), and, moreover, a *little* abashed at her situation, the young Martha could hardly fail of appearing both fair and interesting to the eyes of her playfellow. Jack looked at her much more earnestly than he had ever done before, and thought that she was not only the kindest-hearted little girl in the world, but very handsome; a fact of which, perhaps, he had never till that moment been sufficiently aware.

"Take care of yourself, my dear child," said he, very kindly taking her by the hand.

"But I must not touch you, Martha, for if I do you will be wetter still."

"And look to yourself, Jack," replied Martha, with equal kindness; "I'll go and change, if you will."

"That's a bargain then," he replied, smiling, but with very gentle feelings, at her *naïveté;* "and when we are all got dry again, it will be something to talk about, will it not!"

Martha smiled too; and nodding to him with a look, the kindness of which was no longer veiled by tears, prepared to follow his advice, and by the help of his steadying hand, reached the companion-way, and descended.

This adventure could not easily be forgotten by either,—neither was it. Jack long considered Martha as the kindest-hearted and prettiest girl in the world; and Martha considered Jack as the perfection of sweethearts, and the model of everything that was handsomest in the male creation.

This occurrence helped on, at least to the young people, the last lingering weeks of the voyage: for not only did it, as Jack had pro-

phesied, give them something to talk of, but the ardent gratitude of the fine lad he had saved, and the daily-increasing interest that Martha testified for all that concerned him, could not but touch so tender a heart as Jack's, who, moreover, always remembering that he was but a poor sailor-boy, conceived a strong feeling of gratitude and esteem for the young girl, whose unsophisticated nature led her so completely to overlook all distinctions of rank.

To Mr. and Mrs. O'Donagough, indeed, all this produced no good effect, but rather the contrary; for Jack grew tired of ship-billiards, and greatly preferred standing by his little friend Martha, as she sat perched upon the taffrail, and with her strong clear voice sang love-ditties to the fishes by the hour together. And poor Mrs. O'Donagough fared not at all the better for this additional leisure of her husband's; for he was getting exceedingly restless, rather bilious, and now and then very cross; so that, considerably before they arrived at the port of London, they both became aware that they had been shut up together quite long enough.

Two trifling circumstances only, both occurring within the last week, caused a short intermission of poor Mrs. O'Donagough's yawns, by giving her something puzzling to think of. The first of these was seeing her husband, Mr. Allen O'Donagough, mount the cabin-stairs one fine morning, with his face as cleanly shaved from top to bottom and from side to side, as it was possible for a razor to do it. Not a trace, not a vestige of either mustache or favoris remained, to show what the military glory of that expansive face had once been. The change produced upon his countenance by this operation was very great —and to say the truth, by no means favourable; for little as we may some of us admire the flashy look which every *chevalier d'industrie* can obtain by only restricting the office of his razor, it is nevertheless certain that a great, high-boned, vulgar face, like that of my heroine's present husband, is in no degree improved by being rendered more broadly visible.

At the first glance his wife did not know

him; nor was it, indeed, till he had displayed the whole extent of his large white teeth, in a smile produced by her unconscious stare at him, that she did.

The time when she had almost worshipped the military insignia of his upper lip, and doted on the copious manliness which veiled his ample jaws, was certainly passed, probably never to return, yet could she not look with indifference upon what appeared to her so terrible a falling-off in the striking comeliness of his appearance. She had hitherto never ceased to consider him as a remarkably dashing and fashionable looking man, but now her eyes, as well as her heart, told her that he was not so at all.

"Good Heaven, Major Allen!" was her first involuntary exclamation, "what on earth can have induced you to make such a figure of yourself?"

The gentleman suddenly ceased to smile as she spoke, and answered in a low growling voice, which showed that he had not, like Samson, lost his spirit with his hair, "And

what, madam, can make you call me by a name which I have commanded you never to utter again?"

Poor Mrs. O'Donagough was really frightened, and notwithstanding the high spirit which she prided herself, condescended to say, "Oh, dear me! Mr. O'Donagough, don't be angry! I will never say it again, upon my word and honour. And nobody heard me, you know—that's a comfort. But what *did* you cut off your beautiful whiskers for?"

"You are a fool, Mrs. Allen O'Donagough," was the short reply; and never again was the circumstance alluded to between them. But it cannot be supposed that Mrs. O'Donagough forgot it; or that she could avoid feeling rather uncomfortably anxious as to what motive could have induced so very handsome a man to disfigure himself so dreadfully.

"If it had been only his mustaches," thought she, "I should not have cared; and indeed I know that it would have been perfectly necessary—how else could he possibly pass himself off for the Reverend Mr. O'Dona-

gough? No reverends ever *do* wear mustaches, that's quite true; but those beautiful whiskers, that gave him so completely the air of a man of fashion—there could have been no occasion to shave them! I know the irregular clergy, like my last poor O'Donagough, wear whiskers quite as often as not—not little shabby whiskers either, such as a bishop might wear, and no harm done—but just such full noble-looking whiskers as the Ma—as this foolish man wore; however, it's no good to fret. If anything *was* to happen to him, and I *was* to marry again, I'd take good care to know, if 'twas in the old world or the new, whether there was any likelihood of the man's wanting to scrape his skin, for all the world like a pig prepared for roasting. This one only wants singeing a little, to make him perfect."

The other circumstance which tended in some degree to relieve the wearisome tedium of Mrs. O'Donagough's last few days at sea, was something like a discovery which she at last made, respecting the young sailor-lad, called Jack. By special agreement, Mr. and

Mrs. O'Donagough and their daughter dined in the cabin, and at the table of the captain, though like all other passengers on board, they furnished their own provender; but a few pounds additional to their passage-money had secured to them the dignity of this privilege, which was the more precious, because shared by no other passenger. From some suspicious reason or other, which Captain Wilkins had never explained, his dinner hour, and consequently that of the O'Donagoughs, had been changed after they came on board, and fixed considerably earlier than before. Dining, however, is so welcome an amusement on board ship, that nobody complains of its coming too soon, and the alteration was never objected to.

The weather during the whole passage having been, with few exceptions, remarkably fine, it was the custom of the O'Donagough family to repair to the quarter-deck as soon as the dinner was over and there indulge in nibbling biscuits and sipping toddy. Miss Patty, during this hour of systematic gossiping, fared not so well

as her parents: for to do her justice, she was not at all fond of toddy; and Jack, of whom she certainly was very fond, for some reason or other was never visible on the deck at these times. That he was indeed not on deck, little Patty was perfectly competent to declare, for more than once had she vainly traversed its entire length from stem to stern in search of him. She could not unfortunately penetrate to any of the mysterious recesses below,—*that* she had with some little difficulty been made to understand was impossible; but she would willingly have ransacked the cabin and all its dependencies in search of her friend, only she found, upon once attempting the experiment, that the door was locked.

These efforts to find her playfellow, however, and the disappointment which attended them, were alike confined to her own bosom; and as her father was, as we have seen, very comfortably engaged, and her mother, if possible, still more so—for she took her biscuits and toddy from the luxurious couch of coats and cloaks heretofore described—the absence of the lad

at this hour, constant and regular as it was, had never been noticed by either.

It so happened, however, the very day on which the Atalanta entered the British Channel, the weather being beautifully calm, and the sea as yet in no degree affected by the narrow and troublesome path it had got into, that Mrs. O'Donagough feeling herself particularly well and lively, scorned the repose offered by her cloaks and coats, and trotted down the cabin stairs in search of a basket in which many hourly requirements were stowed, and among others, the last letter of her niece, Mrs. General Hubert. To this letter, it must be confessed, she had made very frequent allusion during the passage, whenever she could get anybody to listen to her; but, nevertheless, she wished to consult it again now, because it contained something about her darling great-niece, Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of her beloved Agnes, and often as she had read the letter, she could not, as she assured Mr. O'Donagough, exactly recollect whether the dear girl was thirteen, or only twelve and a half.

As it was Mrs. O'Donagough's luxurious custom to wear list shoes on board, she went down the companion-way with very little noise, and applying her hand to the lock of the cabin-door, it turned and admitted her.

Great, indeed, was her astonishment at what she saw before her. The usual cabin dinner-table was covered with a marvellously clean cloth, on which was spread, with great attention to neatness, and even some display, all the requisites for a substantial repast. A single glance, it was to be sure a long and steady one, sufficed to show Mrs. O'Donagough that not only great pains had been bestowed upon the dressing it, but that the articles of which it was composed were of the most delicate quality that a long voyage can permit. Two bottles of wine flanked the single plate, to supply which, the various dainties were prepared—and before that plate sat—JACK! Yes, it was Jack, Jack in solitary state, in his usual nautical, and not over-clean, exterior garments, but with the air of being most perfectly at his ease, and of feeling himself

any thing but an intruder in the place he occupied.

At sight of Mrs. O'Donagough, however, his colour certainly mounted considerably, and he rose so suddenly, and with an air so vexed and confused, that had she not known the captain's dinner to have been long over, she might have been tempted to believe that the lad was caught in the act of pilfering what had been prepared for his betters. But as it was, she stood perfectly amazed, astounded, petrified, and puzzled. Many weeks had passed since she had ceased to trouble herself about Jack and his unsailor-like ways; for, finding it impossible to discover the secret, she gradually became convinced that there was none, and all interest in him had died away accordingly. An additional reason for which might probably be, that the lad never by any chance came near enough to speak to her, if it could by possibility be avoided.

But now all this reasonable and dignified tranquillity of spirit was again destroyed! That there *was* something very particular in-

deed in the situation of Jack, it was impossible to doubt, but to discover *what* was beyond her power.

The youth having mumbled something about "having a joke with the captain," passed by her and mounted the stairs, leaving her to all the torments of unassisted conjecture, from which the most accurate examination of the relics of Jack's banquet could not relieve her. In fact, the only thing she could find worthy of arresting her attention was a silver fork—this she discovered on examination, was made to receive the blade of a knife into its handle, and a little further search enabled her to discover the said knife also, and to ascertain that it not only fitted nicely, but that the style and workmanship of this bit of travelling luxury was of a costly kind.

For mere curiosity's sake she would have liked well enough to put the united articles into her pocket; but as the lively thought arose, the recollection that she was on board a ship coming from Botany Bay, came with it, and she discreetly laid the pretty things where

she found them, retaining only the interesting fact that they were both marked with the letter "S."

From that hour to the end of the voyage, which was just five days, including the passage up the river, poor Mrs. O'Donagough was never able to obtain from any one the slightest glimmer of light on this mysterious subject. As the vessel passed Sheerness, a boat was sent on shore, in which she perceived through the cabin-windows as the little craft passed astern, that a great quantity of luggage had been stowed. Unluckily for poor Mrs. O'Donagough, she was at the moment busily employed in some necessary packing operations, which the approach to land rendered indispensable, and her view, therefore, of this parting boat was so indistinct, that she did not recognise the brown curls and blue eyes of Jack, under the foraging cap, that was seated at the stern. Neither did she, from the same unlucky accident, witness the very affectionate farewell exchanged between this provoking boy and the whole of the ship's crew. There was

another farewell, rather more affectionate still, which also she did not see; but it was not only her being in the cabin which prevented this, for it was behind a heap of canvass which concealed them from all eyes, that Jack gave a parting kiss to Patty.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

"OUR NATIVE LAND!"—THE HAPPINESS OF RETURNING TO IT—A VISIT TO THE CUSTOM-HOUSE, WITH A SKETCH OF FEMALE SUFFERINGS NOT UNUSUAL THERE—MISS O'DONAGOUGH'S FILIAL FEELINGS EXPLAINED.

At length the boat was alongside, which was to convey my heroine, her husband and daughter, to those dear dirty steps, beside the Custom-house of London, the stumbling up of which has occasioned joy and gladness to so many hearts. Our party had, of course, a considerable quantity of luggage to remove, and to this Mr. O'Donagough gave pretty nearly his whole attention; but somehow or other, his wife and daughter got very safely into the boat in the midst of it, and the whole freight, after the usual quantity of noise and bustle, was

securely rowed to the landing-place and disembarked.

"At last, Patty!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Donagough, on reaching the highest step, "here we are. Oh! how glad I am that we have done with that beastly ship! If the sight of every rope in her did not make me as sick as a cat, I'll be hanged! Come, dear, get on; you must not begin staring yet. Bless you, child, this is nothing but the very nastiest outskirts of London. There is nothing here worth opening your handsome eyes upon, Patty. Come along, come along! There goes your father into the Custom house, as I take it, and we had best stop outside and watch the men bring up the rest of the goods. Lord! what a quantity they do carry to be sure! There goes my bandbox. If your father had not been a fool he might have contrived to smuggle that. But I never *will* forgive him if he does not bring it out again this minute. Passed or not passed, as he calls it, have it I must and will."

To all this Patty made no answer whatever. She was too much occupied and pre-occupied

to care for anything her mama could say. In fact, her thoughts were revolving with the regularity of a shuttlecock between two battle-doors, from the kiss Jack had given her off Sheerness, to the busy throng moving in all directions round her.

After an interval, so short as to prove that Mr. O'Donagough was a practised and a skilful traveller, he was seen to emerge again from the portal of the Custom-house, when his wife, who was stationed close to it, pounced upon his arm with genuine conjugal appropriation—a manœuvre, by the by, well described by Shakspeare, when he says,

She arms her with the boldness of a wife—

and exclaimed, "What a time you have been, O'Donagough! where is the bandbox? Why surely you have not come away without it? You know as well as I do, that I must have it, and I'll bet a thousand pounds that is exactly the reason you have left it!"

"No, my dear, it was not, I assure you," he replied, with very business-like composure; "it was because the Custom-house officers

would not let me bring it on account of the sweetmeats."

"Sweetmeats, Mr. O'Donagough! Then why did you not let them take out the sweetmeats? You know perfectly well, though now you pretend to look exactly as if you had never heard of it, you know that it is not the sweetmeats that I want, but my dressing box. I declare to Heaven I would as soon have an owl look after my things!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. O'Donagough, composedly; "I am going to call a coach for you. I shall tell the man to drive to the Saracen's Head, and there you must order dinner and beds. No; upon second thoughts, my dear, you had better order tea. It makes, as I well remember, a monstrous difference in the bill, and we may eat, you know, exactly as much cold meat as we like."

Here Mr. O'Donagough held up his finger to a hackney-coachman, as readily as if he had not been beyond reach of any such luxury for nearly fifteen years. But when, with a hand applied to his young daughter's elbow, he was

in the very act of assisting her to mount the uncertain steps, he was startled by the voice of his lady, exclaiming within an inch of his ear,

"How can you, O'Donagough, be such a fool as to make believe that you think I shall go off without my bandbox? I shall not stir a step without it, and that you know. What a thing it is to have a man belonging to one that can't look after such a trifle as that! But it is no matter. I can do it myself!" And with these words, Mrs. O'Donagough rushed into the Custom-house, with the aspect of a tigress seeking her young. There was the same thrusting forward of the lengthened neck—the same eager starting of the protruding eye. And who shall say that there was not the same throbbing emotion at her heart?

Mr. O'Donagough very improperly gave his daughter a look that seemed to say, "Did you ever?" and having desired her to sit quietly in the hackney-coach till they returned, he followed the wife of his bosom with long but deliberate strides, as she won her way to what appeared the most busy part of the vast edi-

fice. He overtook her just in time to hear her say, with astonishing dignity, though panting for breath,

"Pray, sir, will you be pleased to inform me if it is here that the passengers' luggage from the Atalanta has been deposited?"

"The man who is now passing down the room, ma'am, can tell you," was the reply.

Away flew Mrs. O'Donagough after the individual thus indicated; but the man moved quickly and it became speedily evident that she must raise her voice to overtake him.

"Will you tell me where the luggage from the Atalanta is stowed?" screamed the flying lady, at the very highest pitch of her voice. But this effort also was in vain, for a multitude of other sounds blended themselves with the voice of Mrs. O'Donagough, and the official hurried on. Vexed, heated, weary, but more determined than ever to perform what she had undertaken, if only to prove how wretchedly inefficient in all such matters her husband must be, she continued to run on with all the velocity that a heavy cloak, and the ample

volume of her own person would permit, till at length the man she was pursuing stopped, and at the same instant her eye caught sight of the bandbox, the abduction of which from the boatman who brought them on shore, had caused her so much inquietude.

"This is it, this is the box I want, sir!" she exclaimed, extending her arm to seize her recovered treasure.

"By your leave, ma'am," said another official, taking hold of it with professional firmness, but perfect civility; "it is going this way."

"It *can't* go that way, sir—I must have it. I do assure you it is perfectly impossible for me to get into the coach without it, and I am quite confident, that, as a gentleman, you can't refuse to let me take away such a trifle as this one bandbox."

"It has been looked into," said another officer, "and is crammed full of sweetmeats. It must pay duty."

"Dear me!—pay duty, sir, for a dressing-box? I don't care a straw for the sweetmeats, comparatively speaking, and Mr. O'Donagough

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*Mrs. O'Donagough objects to the custom of the Custom house.*

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must of course pay the duty, if he chooses to have them—all I ask for is my dressing-box, and I shall think it a most disgraceful thing to the English nation, if a lady is to have her very dressing-box taken from her the moment she puts her feet on English ground. I am sure the very savages themselves would know better! And what's more, I do'nt believe it is legal to seize it, for I have used the same and no other for years and years, and you may depend upon it that if there *is* anything illegal in the matter, the thing won't pass without notice. My connexions are not in a rank of life to permit anything of that kind. It may be all very well for common people to have their property snatched out of their hands this way, but it won't do for the aunt of General Hubert!"

Mr. O'Donagough, who had by this time reached her side, stood with more *nonchalance* than was quite amiable, while his indignant wife thus exerted herself. Nay, some persons might even have suspected that he was base enough to quiz the vehement energy of her

pleadings; for not only did he remain perfectly silent, but now and then exchanged such a look with the individual with whom she was contesting the legality of the transaction, as might have easily been construed into joining in the laugh against her. Fortunately for the preservation of the King's peace, on the spot sacred to the collection of his own customs, Mrs. O'Donagough was too completely occupied to be aware of this, and it was only when at length she ceased to speak, that she perceived her husband beside her.

"I *do* wonder, Mr. O'Donagough," she then began, "how you can stand there like a statue, without ever uttering a single syllable, good, bad, or indifferent! I do believe you are the only man in the whole civilized world who would let all the trouble of travelling fall upon his wife in this way. Pray, sir, do make the people understand that the coach is waiting for me, and that it is impossible I should go without my dressing-box!"

"Why, my dear, you and I don't do business in the same way.—Pray, sir, how long will

it be before our things can be passed? These are the articles in this corner—just one dozen packages, great and small. When will they be looked over?"

"Within an hour, sir."

"Now then, my dear, make up your mind. Will you wait here yourself one hour, till you can see the whole lot sent off? Or will you go on to the Saracen's Head, and leave me here to get it done? Or will you prefer my going with you, and returning here again after I have seen you and Martha safely lodged?"

There is hardly anything in the world so provoking, when one has worked oneself up to a considerable degree of energy, as to be made to perceive, as plainly as that two and two make four, that no energy at all was necessary. Mrs. O'Donagough would at that moment have given anything short of her dressing-box, if without danger she could have bestowed upon her husband a good cuff; but she restrained herself, and only replied, "Oh! pray do not trouble yourself to go with us—I am sure I hope there is nothing going to happen in which

you could do any good. Stay, if you like, and as long as you like, and let all the things be seized one after another, without putting out your finger to prevent it. I don't care a straw about it. It would be convenient, certainly, for me to get my dressing-box before I go, but as you do not choose to take any trouble about it, of course I must submit. Few gentlemen, I fancy, would like to see their wives treated in this sort of way, particularly about a thing that I took out of England myself, years and years ago. However, I shall say no more about it. I know the transaction to be perfectly infamous in every way, and that's all I have to say on the subject. General Hubert, or Lady Elizabeth either, will be able to tell me whether it will be worth my while to take any further notice of it. The importance of the thing itself is comparatively nothing—but no man of spirit, I presume, would choose that his wife should be treated with fraud and indignity—that's all I wish to observe."

This speech was intended for all within hearing, but it is doubtful whether any one besides

her husband heard a syllable of it. There is, perhaps, no place in which the constitutional propensity of the gentler sex to relieve their full hearts in words, is endured with more unresisting passiveness than in scenes of active public business. The stream is generally permitted to flow on without let or hindrance; and if, as usually happens, no attention is paid to it, the obvious reason lies in the judicious earnestness of the functionaries to perform the ladies' wishes, without pausing even to listen to their eloquent expression of them.

Mrs. O'Donagough waited a few seconds for an answer, but receiving none, either from her husband or any one else, she turned suddenly round upon a person actively engaged in the examination of a host of trunks just arrived from France, and said, "Am I to have my dressing-box, sir, or not?"

The man looked up at her for an instant, but pursued his employment without answering.

"What insufferable insolence!" she exclaimed, fronting round again to Mr. O'Dona-

gough; "I am perfectly persuaded that there is no nation in the world where such conduct would be endured, except this! And I believe also," she continued somewhat in a lower voice, and preparing to leave the room,—"I believe also that there is not another man in existence who would suffer his wife to be thus treated without resenting it."

"You will get these things in the corner looked over next, will you?" said Mr. O'Donagough with the most perfect composure.

"Yes, sir, I will," replied the man he addressed, with such unalterable civility, that Mrs. O'Donagough began to suspect, no scolding, however violent, could do any good; and having fortunately arrived at this conclusion, she condescended to take her husband's arm and walk off; muttering, however, the whole way some very biting observations on the difference between some men and other men. But Mr. O'Donagough was in no humour to make a fuss about it, and continued to whistle "Oh! the roast beef of Old England, and, oh! the old English roast beef," till they reached

the hackney-coach, in which they had left their young daughter.

Many papas and mamas would have felt some scruple, if not a little fear, at the idea of leaving a young lady of fourteen in a scene so noisy and so new, as the street in front of the London Custom-house: but it is more than probable that they both of them knew sufficiently well the excellent condition of the young Martha's nerves, to prevent all notion of such idle alarms. They found her, as most likely they expected, still unsatiated with the delight of staring at all the people, and all the carts, and all the horses, and all the boxes, which were passing in a whirling maze before her view.

"Well, chicken!" cried her father, inserting his face between that of his wife and the window of the hackney-coach, "are you not tired of waiting for us?"

"Tired?" replied the young lady; "not I; never saw such fun in my life. What have you been doing, mama, all this time? It is a thousand pities you should not have seen all

these people pass. There must be some monstrous great arrival in England, to-day, I'm sure."

Mr. O'Donagough laughed. "I am glad you have been amused, chick," said he, standing a little aside, while his lady was getting into the coach; "and I should like very well to hear all you have got to say about it. But you must tell me all when I come."

"Lor, papa, you ain't going to stay here, are you?" said Martha, in a voice that betokened disappointment.

"How can you be so absurd, child?" said her mother sharply, drawing up the window of the coach within exactly one inch of her husband's nose. "For God's sake let us make him useful if we can. He is by no means too well inclined that way, I promise you."

When a factious and rebellious spirit gets possession of a woman, it gives her a degree of courage that is often quite astonishing. Mrs. O'Donagough knew, as well as she did that the sun would rise on the morrow, that however enduringly her husband might receive for a

time, the rebukes and scoffings of her contumacious spirit, he would settle the account fairly with her at last, and this with a manly preponderance of force, which to any woman possessed of less audacious vigour of mind, would have been really alarming. Perhaps, indeed, Mrs. O'Donagough herself, was not always entirely free from trepidation, when these moments of retribution arrived; yet it was very rarely that the fear of them was sufficiently powerful to check her conjugal vivacities.

Mr. O'Donagough did not like having the coach-window drawn up within an inch of his nose, and employing the skilful manœuvre by which servants outside a carriage let down a glass forgotten by the ladies within, he managed to remove the barrier thus interposed between himself and his "womankind."

"What the devil is the matter with you, madam?" said he, in a voice that caused more than one passing eye to turn round upon him. "Don't tire me, Mrs. O'Donagough," he added, in a lower tone, "or by

Jove you may wish I had left you behind at Sydney."

Mrs. O'Donagough was at this moment very advantageously situated for receiving the burst of wrath which she knew had been accumulating during the last half-hour. She dared not, indeed, attempt to draw up the window again, but raising herself on her feet as nearly as the roof of the carriage would let her, she sat down again in the corner with a degree of vehemence, which made the crazy springs of the vehicle dip under her as if never to rise again; and in lieu of her magnificent countenance, presented so broad, thick, and seemingly impregnable a shoulder to her spouse, that he felt he was worsted, and showing his large row of still white teeth to his daughter, as with a backward movement of his thumb he pointed to the massive shoulder, he stepped back upon the pavement, calling out at the same time to the coachman, to "Drive to the Saracen's Head, Snow-hill."

Martha made a movement that brought her face parallel to the opposite window, and her

shoulders to those of her mama's, so that the laugh produced by her papa's facetiousness was not observed.

"Brute!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Donagough, as the carriage drove off.

"Oh! my gracious—what a beautiful bonnet that is! And that—and that," cried the young lady, as they passed a shop-window; "shouldn't I look beautiful, mama, with those green feathers?"

"Perhaps you might, my dear," replied her mother; "and you must be as sharp as a needle, Patty, I can tell you that, to get what you want out of your skinflint father. He'll be smart enough himself, I'll answer for him, for he is as vain as an old peacock; but as for us, and our appearance, he won't care much, I dare say; and a hard tug we shall have, before we get anything decent out of him. Mark my words, if we don't."

Of her two parents, Miss O'Donagough decidedly liked her papa the best; but she was already much too good a tactician to let this appear before the eyes of her mama. She felt,

indeed, her daily increasing power over both, and as deliberately determined to make the most of it, as if she had studied the curious and incalculable effect of skilfully-applied domestic influence for years.

One means which she had long ago discovered, as beyond all others effectual in promoting this, was the seizing every safe opportunity of making each fond parent believe that she was quite willing, if she dared, to become his or her partisan, upon all occasions, against the other. Some idea of her acute and almost precocious talents may be gathered from the fact, that she had already persuaded her father of her perfect enjoyment of all the ridicule, he from time to time slily threw upon his lady; and her mother, that she considered her as exceedingly ill-used, whenever she failed of having her own way in every contest she fell into, with her master and her lord.

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Mrs. O'Donagough had changed but little in her feelings and principles of action, since the

day when she arrived at the hotel at Exeter, with her niece Agnes, and Betty Jacks. She still bore herself as one deserving of all deference and respect, and called about her on arriving at the Saracen's Head, as if nobody so great had ever driven under its awful sign before.

The first waiter who met her passed on, exciting thereby her deepest indignation; but at length her loud and dignified demand, "Can we have beds and supper here?" produced something like the desired effect; and she was ushered into a little dusky, dirty, up-stairs sitting-room, from the window of which, however, Martha had the gratification of finding that she could look out upon the street. It was the latter end of the month of August, and no one perhaps but a young lady, just escaped from the ship that had brought her from New South Wales, could have found such keen delight in gazing upon the hot and dusty precincts of Snow-hill. To her, however, it was a sort of opening paradise, in which she fancied she could dwell for ever without becoming weary.

"What quantities of carriages, mama! And, oh! good gracious, the men! and such bonnets and flowers! If papa won't give us some money, I am sure we shall grow wild."

"Yes, to be sure we shall," replied her mother, who, with her hand on her daughter's shoulder, and her head protruded farther still than that of the young lady, hung over the pavement, enamoured of all the metropolitan splendour she saw passing there.

"London is a glorious place, there is no doubt of that, mama," said Martha.

"The finest in the world—every body says so; and I am sure it is impossible to stand here and doubt it," replied her mother. "But do you know, Patty, I am dying with hunger. I suppose your father would kill us if we ordered tea before he came."

"I am sure it would be very savage of him to want to keep us starving here, while he is amusing himself with all the beautiful things as he comes along," replied the young lady.

"Well, my dear, if you have courage to face it, I don't care. He was in a brutal ill-humour

when we drove off: but, I suppose, if you tell him that you were feeling so sick and faint that you thought you should die, he won't say much about it. So, if you feel courage for it, I'll ring."

"Oh, lor! mama, I feel courage enough, if that's all. I'm sure I could eat a dozen rounds of buttered toast for my own share. Ring away, mama, I'll stop papa's mouth when he comes. You see if I don't."

Thus encouraged, Mrs. O'Donagough did ring, and her liberal orders given quite in the Silverton-park style, for tea, toast, muffins, eggs, cold chicken, and ham, were obeyed with admirable promptitude, and the mother and daughter had got half through the tea-urn, and very nearly quite through all the eatables upon the table, when Mr. Allen O'Donagough made his appearance.

"Civil and obliging, upon my word," he exclaimed, with "*a touch of very natural feeling*," as he entered the room. "While I have been fagging like a blackamoor to get your cursed things through the customs, you two sit

down and devour everything that is to be had, without troubling yourselves for a single instant to think of me."

"If you say that, you are a very wicked man, because you will tell fibs," replied his daughter. "We did think of you, and talk of you too, a great deal, before we set to. And it was I told mama that I was sure as sure, that you wouldn't and couldn't be angry. Just think, papa, the difference of sitting stock stone still up here, longing for a morsel of food to keep soul and body together, and being busy and blithe in the midst of all the beautiful sights, like you have been."

While saying these words, Martha employed herself in preparing on one fork a huge collop of ham, with a lump of fowl to match it, and on another, an equally full-sized morsel of boiled beef, daintily covered with mustard.

"Now, here's what I call two beautiful mouthfuls. Open your gills, papa. This one first, 'cause the mustard is strongest. Well, how d'ye like it? Very good, is it? I thought so. Now this.—And that's very good, too, it

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*Miss Patty's interesting mode of stopping her Pa's mou*

seems, by your manner of munching it. Now say if I haven't thought about you! I told mama I'd stop your mouth, and all you've got to do is just to say which you like best, and more will come of it, I'll be bound, as soon as you order it."

There was something so exceedingly clever, and so prettily playful, in this device of the young Martha to restore her hungry father's good humour, that both parents were delighted with it. Mrs. O'Donagough got up laughing and rang the bell without being bid; and Mr. O'Donagough pinched his daughter's cheek, called her a saucy hussy, and said that he'd be hanged if there was such another girl of her years in Europe, or out of it.

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## CHAPTER IX.

DISCUSSIONS RESPECTING THE FUTURE PLANS OF THE O'DONAGOUGHS — PLEASANT ASSURANCES— BRILLIANT HOPES—MR. ALLEN O'DONAGOUGH TAKES A WALK, AND RETURNS FROM IT EXCEEDINGLY WELL SATISFIED.

It will easily be imagined that Mr. and Mrs. O'Donagough, notwithstanding their occasional little tiffs, had found a sufficient number of tranquil moments on board ship, to discuss very fully the important question, of what it would be best to do with themselves on first arriving in London. Mrs. O'Donagough very naturally declared, that her first and dearest object would be to throw herself into the arms of her beloved Agnes, and once more to embrace the brother of her fond young memory, Mr. Willoughby; for which reasons,

Berkeley-square rose, as it were, spontaneously to her lips, every time the subject of settling themselves was mentioned.

But Mr. O'Donagough, who in one way or another had contrived to learn more facts concerning the movements of the fashionable world, than had hitherto fallen within the scope of his wife's observation, undertook to assure her, that in the month of August there was no chance whatever of finding either Mrs. Hubert or Mr. Willoughby in London. It was, therefore, necessary, to consider what was most desirable in the second degree; and the affectionate Mrs. O'Donagough hinted, just before they left the vessel, that her feelings were becoming so strongly imperative for a reunion, that what *she* should best like would be, to follow her relatives wheresoever they might be, in town or country, sea-side or hill-side, amidst the enchanting dissipation of a watering-place, or the soberer joys of their own rural home. But Mr. O'Donagough thought it might be more prudent to decide for or against this, according to circumstances,

and the discussion had been broken off unfinished, by the arrival of the custom-house officers on board.

It was now revived again, over the substantial tea-table, at the Saracen's Head, both parties enjoying the advantage of restored good-humour, and the only difference in their mode of treating the subject being, that the lady truly believed the question as to whether they should follow General Hubert to his country-house to be in doubt, whereas the gentleman exceedingly well knew that it was not.

Mr. Allen O'Donagough certainly had his faults like other mortals, but a positive love of wrangling was not one of them; and though, of course, like all other sensible married men, he felt the necessity of having his own way, he always achieved it with as little quarrelling as possible. He knew that "his Barnaby" was a high-spirited woman, by no means disposed to trot very easily under the matrimonial yoke, and decidedly preferring a little skirmish now and then, though she knew that she must yield

eventually, to the contemptible submissiveness of living as if she had no will of her own at all. It had therefore become almost habitual to him at all family consultations, respecting the subject of which he had made up his mind beforehand, to let her go on arguing as if it were still in doubt, and uttering his fiat only at the moment when he could walk off, and hear no more about it.

Respecting the immediate manner of their settling themselves in England, however, he had *not* quite made up his mind. Not that he had the slightest intention of scouring the country in pursuit of General Hubert, and still less of quartering himself upon his household; any advantages to be derived from that quarter, he was quite aware, must be sought for cautiously, and, on his part at least, with considerable tact. But, notwithstanding all his boasting on the subject of identity, he had still a few nervous doubts as to the prudence of launching himself once more upon the town. True, his sphere of action would be greatly changed; his age was changed; his beard, with all its fancy

*et ceteras*, was changed; and, though not equally important, his name was changed. Moreover, it was exceedingly probable that the set he had left had changed too; so that, on the whole, he was pretty sanguine as to the possibility of settling himself as a gentleman of fashion and fortune in London. He really believed that "his Barnaby" might assist him in this; which belief assuredly turned aside many a *strong* word, which without it might have chanced to wound her ears; and it was now with all possible civility that he listened to her, as she again burst forth with all the vehemence of strong affection on the subject of finding out and following Mrs. General Hubert.

"I don't think I *can* live, my dear Donny, till the time you say they are likely to come to town, without seeing her!" said Mrs. O'Donagough, laying aside upon the margin of her plate the chicken-bone she had been polishing. "Think what a time it is!"

"Very true, my dear! only we shall gain one advantage that ought to console you. Were Mrs. Hubert in town at this moment,

Mrs. O'Donagough, I should deem it very disadvantageous to introduce Martha to her. You may depend upon it, that none of the finery you may have brought over will be of the right sort here."

"*That* I have no doubt in the world is true," replied his wife, rejoicing beyond measure at this positive evidence of his intending to "*new rig*" them. "Even Patty herself, dear creature! young as she is, feels *that*, and was just saying so, as we came along. But, Lord bless you, my dear Donny, all that can be set to rights in no time, in such a place as London, if you will but let us have the money."

"No doubt of it, dear; but we must be exceedingly careful, I do assure you, in all things concerning that most important article. On some occasions it must be spent, and freely too. There is no help for it if we hope to do anything important. But, for that very reason we must keep a tight hand over it, where we may do so without danger. Not that I mean to deny you and Patty fine clothes. Quite the contrary. I know they will be often

necessary; and, if things go well, you shall have them."

On hearing this, Martha left her place at the table, where, to say truth, she had made such good use of her time, as to make her remaining there any longer quite unnecessary, and walking round to her father's chair, testified the satisfaction his last words had afforded her, by giving him a kiss.

"What, you like to hear that, do you, Pat? Well, be a good girl, and do in all things as I bid you, and you shall be as fine as a queen. So butter me a piece of toast."

"Well, but my dearest O'Donagough," said his wife, quite as well pleased by language so encouraging as her daughter, and altogether in a state of mind the most enviable, "you must not forget my darling Agnes! And you may be quite sure, dear, that where *she* is, we may show off Patty to advantage. For people in their rank of life never *do* poke themselves in out-of-the-way places. Therefore I vote for driving to Berkeley-square, learning from the servants where the family are passing the

summer, taking a lodging for a week, just for the purpose of getting the things we most want, and then setting off to enjoy the exquisite pleasure, the heartfelt satisfaction of placing my lovely child in the bosom of my niece, and receiving her little ones into mine! Shall it be so, dearest O'Donagough? Tell me, is there any objection to a plan so every way delightful?"

"None in the world, my dear," replied her husband, gravely proceeding with his meal. "Ring the bell, Patty, my dear, I must have a slice or two more ham."

"Then I may consider it as settled? Only think! in a week's time I shall present my child, my own beautiful daughter, to the wife of a General! to a lady received at Court! with dozens of titles among her nearest relations; and, nevertheless, our nearest relation into the bargain. I'll be hanged, Donny, if it does not all seem like a dream!"

"I dare say it does, my dear. Give me that back-bone, Patty, and thigh along with it, if you will."

"Then we may consider it as a settled thing, dear O'Donagough, that we are to follow the Huberts immediately?"

"You may consider it as a settled thing, my love, that to set you and Patty off in the very best style is what I intend to do; and your relations, of course, ought to be among the first to see it."

Mrs. Allen O'Donagough was wise enough to take counsel with herself before she said any more upon the subject; and being, notwithstanding all their seeming consultations on the subject, most utterly ignorant of all her husband's real plots and plans, she was, on the whole, inclined to flatter herself that her wishes respecting their immediate destination would be attended to; for, as she justly observed to her daughter, when they were alone, "clever as Mr. O'Donagough is about most things, it is quite impossible he should know as much about the *dear Huberts* as I do!"

Thus, on the whole, their first evening in London was passed in great domestic harmony; but Mrs. O'Donagough and her daughter both

declaring themselves early ready for bed, Mr. O'Donagough affectionately advised them to yield to the inclination, and saying almost in the words of Prospero,

'Tis a good dulness,

bid them both good night, with the assurance that though he was obliged to go out for half an hour, to get a refractory razor put in order, he should also, probably, be very early in bed. He then kindly lighted candles for them, nay, even opened the door with a smile so gracious, and manner so observant, that Mrs. O'Donagough was forcibly reminded of the fascinations of other days; and when he again wished her good night, as she passed out, she too looked up at him, with a glance as like her former glances as she could make it, at the same time, however, patting his chin playfully, she said, "Oh! why did you cut off your whiskers, dear?"

"Why did I cut off my whiskers?" he repeated as soon as the door was closed behind them. "That I might sally forth, my charming Barnaby, as I will do this night, with the de-

lightful confidence of being recognised by no one."

The sensations produced on an Englishman by returning to London after even a much shorter absence than that of Mr. Allen O'Donagough, are always powerful; and, if no particular circumstances exist to injure the effect, exceedingly delightful. The stupendous world it encloses, is sure to have spread farther and wider still, than when he left it. New displays of wealth—new demonstrations of the power it brings—new proofs of that excess of civilization, which, for lack of other work, turns the genius of man to the production of varieties in every article he uses, because improvement can go no farther. All this he is sure to see at every step he takes; and then the aspect of all those he meets, at once so familiar to his memory, yet personally so utterly unknown. The features, the complexion, the gait, bringing to his eye and his heart associations a thousand times more intimately belonging to him, notwithstanding the individual strangeness of each, than he could ever have felt in the foreign

land whence he returned. Of all this Mr. Allen O'Donagough was fully conscious, and the excitement it produced was exceedingly agreeable.

As he walked farther and farther westward, these pleasant sensations multiplied; his heart swelled with a well-balanced mixture of national and individual triumph; and, notwithstanding all the awkward accidents of his past life, he would have been sorry to run the risk of changing conditions with any person he met. He knew he must have been a monstrously clever fellow, to be where and what he was at that moment; and he felt this with a very natural degree of satisfaction at the conviction. After all that had passed, the particulars of which, even to himself, he did not think it necessary to recapitulate—after all this, at the age of fifty-three, to find himself parading the streets of London, clear as a new-born babe from every taint of civil sin, and with his pockets full of cash, that no man could seize upon, and cry, "Rascal! that cash is mine!" was a degree of prosperity that might well

make him feel some inches taller than usual as he walked.

It was by an impulse that had as much of instinct in it as will, that he at length found himself among the billiard-rooms of Leicester-square and its precincts. The unsightly Palais Royal of London, surrounded him on all sides; and as he looked at its increased glow of gas-light, and breathed the queer mixture with which it has there pleased man to supply his lungs, in lieu of atmospheric air, he felt that he was once again AT HOME!

It would have required a much stronger effort than he conceived himself called upon to make, to avoid entering beneath one of the many roofs, which by night and day sheltered the devotees who pass their existence in making three little ivory balls run about and knock each other. He did enter; and mounting the stairs with a step as eager, though less active than heretofore, found himself not without some emotion, on a spot where he had stood a thousand times before.

There were many persons in the room; but

he looked round, and saw not one single face that he remembered, till the marker, changing his place, displayed to him features, once as familiar to his eye as the dial on which he scored his games; but with an expression which, though not changed, was marked by lines so much stronger and deeper than heretofore, that the man looked like a caricature of his former self.

At first sight of him, Mr. Allen O'Donagough started, and felt half inclined to turn about, and make his exit before he had caught his eye. But his better judgment told him that by so doing he would lose an excellent opportunity of testing the effect of his altered appearance on an old acquaintance, and be forced to try it where it might perhaps be much more dangerous to fail. He therefore stood his ground; and when he perceived that the man's eye rested quietly and steadily on him, without the slightest indication of ever having examined his features before, his confidence increased sufficiently to lead him into conversation. The result was all that he desired; his

observations were sufficiently scientific to merit even a marker's attention, and the man both looked at and listened to him, but still without betraying any trace of remembrance whatever. While suffering some little anxiety from his doubts how this experiment might answer, Mr. Allen O'Donagough probably forgot the great advantage (under existing circumstances) of fifteen years which had passed over his curls since he had last appeared before the eyes which so fortunately knew him not. Of all his advantages, perhaps this was the only one of which our *ci-devant* Major was not fully sensible.

Nothing could exceed the lightness and gaiety of heart which ensued upon this successful experiment. He felt himself born again into the only world in which he wished to live; his outward skin, somewhat the worse for the wear, cast off, all his talents ripened, and his character and name without a stain!

There was one triumph more, a touch of which he was determined to enjoy without further delay. Mr. Allen O'Donagough had

played billiards when he left England, but he played so much better now, that he could not but fancy his chance with the professional individual who had formerly been the object of his emulation and his envy, would be very different from what it was in days past. He accordingly engaged him as soon as the tables should be at leisure; and when the moment arrived, set about the game with almost as zealous a desire to win it, as if he had staked ten times the amount they were to play for.

The play of Mr. Allen O'Donagough was certainly improved; perhaps that of the marker was improved also; but neither the one nor the other had lost or forgotten any of those little peculiar touches of skill which distinguish one great billiard-man from another. The marker's eye had perused the person and countenance of the new comer, something as an athlete of old might have done the conformation of one about to wrestle with him; and this survey had brought no single trait or movement to his mind, which suggested a suspicion that they had ever met before. No sooner, however,

were the balls in full action, than a particular stroke, for which our Major had been famous, awakened some long-forgotten manœuvrings in the marker's mind, and he suddenly turned round and directed a stare pregnant with inquiry into the stranger's face.

"Beg your pardon, sir; but may I ask your name?" said the man with great civility.

"O'Donagough. What is your reason for asking?" was the reply. But as he made it, the colour mounted over the ample cheeks of the incognito, and he felt he had made a blunder.

"Only because that pretty hazard of yours put me so in mind of a chap that used to play here half a score years ago, or more, may be; and I don't remember to have seen exact the same stroke from any other man."

"Do you know this stroke?" demanded Mr. Allen O'Donagough, recovering himself, and performing a very skilful manœuvre that he had learned from a New Orleans man, with whom he had played at Sydney.

"No, sir! No, upon my soul! That is

quite a foreign stroke, I take it,—you have played abroad, sir, I'll be bound."

"I learnt that at New Orleans," replied Mr. Allen O'Donagough.

"No wonder, sir, that you're a good player then; for I have known New Orleans men as have beat us all hollow."

Mr. Allen O'Donagough won his game, and retired; having received a hint which he felt might be very useful to him. "Egad! I must shave my play as well as my mustache, if I intend to remain incog.," was the thought that passed through his head, as he gaily proceeded to reconnoitre during another hour or so, the various alterations, additions, and improvements made during his absence throughout all the regions that he knew and loved the best. But like a prudent domestic man as he was, he returned soon after midnight to the Saracen's Head, having just done and seen enough to make him equally sanguine and impatient as regarded the variety of brilliant experiments which lay before him.

## CHAPTER X.

ALL PRELIMINARIES HAPPILY ARRANGED—MR. ALLEN O'DONAGOUGH AND HIS SUITE SET OFF FOR BRIGHTON—EMOTIONS PRODUCED ON THE MIND OF MISS MARTHA, BY LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW—MR. ALLEN O'DONAGOUGH APPEARS IN A NEW DRESS—HE MAKES A NEW AND RATHER DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT, BUT IT ANSWERS.

If the result of Mr. Allen O'Donagough's experiment upon the memory of the billiard-marker had been productive of satisfaction to himself, its consequences were more gratifying still to his lady. Little as he had said about it, his private intention had been to keep as much as possible out of the way of General Hubert, and all the brilliant set in which he presumed him to move, till he should be prepared to meet him advantageously.

The first step towards this was, the ascer-

taining that his own altered appearance was likely to prevent all danger of disagreeable reminiscences; the second must, of course, consist in preparations for assuming such an appearance and manner of life as might justify the ambitious hope of being received as a relation.

To this he attached quite as much importance as his wife, though he said much less about it, and was determined to hazard more, and run greater risks to obtain it, than it ever entered into her head to hope for.

Mr. Allen O'Donagough had ever been a man of spirit and enterprise; and having paid the penalty, almost inevitable in his line, upon indulging with too little caution in the display of his peculiar talents, he now determined, with ripened age, and ripened wisdom, to carry on business with that species of boldness and prudence united, which is only to be found in the very highest class of his profession. During many years of his residence in New South Wales, his purpose had been to make Paris the theatre of his future experiments;

but he saw, or fancied he saw in the remarkable accident which had brought him within reach of such persons as his wife claimed kindred with, the possibility of a career infinitely more distinguished than he had ever before ventured to hope for. There was considerable sagacity displayed in the reasoning by which he convinced himself that the very circumstances that seemed to render such hopes almost ridiculously audacious, would, in reality, make their attainment easy. Had General Hubert, and the wealthy and distinguished persons with whom he was connected, been less completely above all and everything with which Mr. Allen O'Donagough had mixed himself during his former life, there might, and must have been danger, notwithstanding his changed appearance, of such accidental allusions to past scenes, as it might have been very difficult to get over. But, as it was, nothing of the kind could be at all likely to occur; and having once made up his mind to hazard, as a necessary outlay, a considerable portion of the money he had contrived to make, he became almost as

impatient to open the campaign, as Mrs. O'Donagough herself.

During the course of the following day much business was got through. By inquiries made according to Mrs. O'Donagough's suggestion in Berkeley-square, it was ascertained that General Hubert's family were at Brighton. By boldly parading through all the different haunts where formerly he was best known, Mr. O'Donagough found there was no danger whatever of his being recognised as the flash Major Allen, once so conspicuous among them. By the placing an English bank-note for twenty pounds in the hands of his wife, with a declaration that it was to be wholly expended in the decoration of herself and her daughter, he produced in the hearts of both a throb of pleasure which few things in this life can equal; and laid the foundation of two wardrobes, which were destined for years to be the admiration of many beholders. And, by placing himself in the hands of a first-rate German artist in St. James's-street, he was not only sure of coming forth from them as

near in shape and air to the standard he desired to obtain, as it was possible for mortal shears to make him; but with as much safety as any precaution could ensure of not permitting his person to be studied by any operator, who had ever enjoyed that advantage before.

In addition to all this, the active O'Donagough contrived, before the day was half over, to have himself and his appendages established in private lodgings in Hatton-garden, where, by the aid of a neighbouring ham-shop, and a little lodging-house cookery they contrived to live for a week at very trifling expense.

But what a week of ecstacy it was! And how fully was it demonstrated in the case of Mrs. O'Donagough, that mind is omnipotent over matter! Few people enjoyed "*nice things*," as she was wont to call them; that is to say, such eating as particularly suited her fancy, with more keen relish than Mrs. O'Donagough; yet during this week of strongly-excited sensibilities, although nothing of an edible nature was set before her that she

could upon reflection approve, she scarcely uttered a murmur. Tough steaks, and greasy cutlets appeared, and were consumed almost without an observation; while the soaring spirit enjoyed a banquet in the contemplation of caps, bonnets, gowns, and mantles, not yet perceptible to the eye, perhaps, but of which the intellectual faculties were fully cognizant, which rendered all grosser gratifications contemptible.

"I do enjoy my porter, though!" uttered after the dismissal of a peculiarly unmanageable specimen of what is called animal food, was almost the only symptom betrayed by Mrs. O'Donagough of her being alive to anything of the kind.

At length,

Industrious man had done his part,

and industrious women also. "*The things*" were all sent home, and all that remained to be done before their places were taken for Brighton, was "to pack them up," as Patty said, "so that they might all come out, looking

as lovely and beautiful as when they were put in."

"And where are we to leave all the rubbish we have brought over, Donny, while we make this delightful little trip?" inquired his lady.

Mr. O'Donagough had hired a garret in the house for the purpose—Mr. O'Donagough had secured three outside places by the earliest coach—Mr. O'Donagough had, with his own hands, brought home a little basket in which their necessary refreshments during the following day were to be deposited—in short, Mr. O'Donagough had forgotten nothing.

"Well now, everything seems smooth before us," said Mrs. O'Donagough, over their last Hatton-garden tea-table. "Oh! my darling Agnes! How I do long to get at her! By the by, Donny, I do think it was rather silly of you, never to let me mention to her the time of our coming over. If I had, they would be expecting us, and I am not quite certain if I should not like that better than taking them by surprise."

"We have discussed that matter already,

my dear," replied her peaceable husband. "My notion was, that it would be better to take them by surprise, and I think so still."

"Well! that's settled now, so there is no good in talking any more about it. But don't you think that if they were any of them to see Patty and me scrambling down from the top of the coach, they might think it did not look as if we were really people of fashion, as you have all along promised we should be?" said his wife.

Mr. Allen O'Donagough paused a little before he replied. This was one of the points upon which his system of tactics dictated very strong regulations, and though he was very sleepy, and much more inclined to dose than to talk, having secured himself from slipping off the horse-hair bottomed chair, by fixing his feet upon the mantelpiece, he roused himself sufficiently to express what he thought the occasion called for.

"As to that, my dear, and, indeed, as to all things of the same kind, it is quite necessary that you, and Patty too, should understand

matters thoroughly at once. I *do* mean that we should appear like people of fashion—I am making immense sacrifices, and running enormous risks for this purpose; but it is altogether childish and silly to suppose that this can be done by people no richer than we are, without a vast deal of very clever management. The real secret is, Mrs. O'Donagough, to keep all your contrivances out of sight; and if you can find out the way to do that, it don't signify a single straw what saving tricks you practise behind the scenes. As to my driving about the country like your fine cousins and nieces, and I don't know what all—it is perfect madness to dream of such a thing—I give you my honour that I should be in jail before I was six months older. But if we all carry on the war upon the same principle, setting our wits to work, one and all, to save money when nobody is looking at us, and to spend it in good style when they are, we may go on making an excellent appearance, and with no danger of getting into a scrape either. Do you understand what I mean, Patty?"

"Oh! dear yes, papa, I do indeed; and I think it is a very good way. I never do care how dirty or shabby my clothes are when I am out of sight, so that I can be smart when I go out to be seen," was the young lady's reply.

"Kiss me, darling!" said the delighted father, who was really becoming more fond of her every day; "that is exactly the principle on which we must all act; and I hope Mrs. O'D., that you intend to be as reasonable about it as your daughter?"

"Let me alone for that sort of thing, O'Donagough. I don't believe that there is a woman in the world who would be more capable of sacrificing everything to the making a good appearance, than I should. I was always brought up from my earliest infancy to think a great deal of it. My poor dear mother, I am sure, never thought of anything else, and I should be sorry if my daughter did not come after me with the same right feelings. All that is to be said, therefore, about this going outside, is just that we must take care not to be seen or known."

"That is quite right, my dear, and speaking like yourself. This time, of course, there can be no danger, as nobody that you ever saw in your life before would be likely to find you out on the top of the Brighton coach. However, as a general rule, it may be well to remember, that on all such occasions, the best and safest way is to make yourself look as little like what you are as possible. So that instead of being rather better dressed than the rest of the company on the top of a coach, people that understand the sort of thing that we have in view, would take care to be the worst. For just observe: now, supposing we sat opposite to some sharp-sighted body, who, having scoured us from head to shoe, should make up his wise noddle to believe that we were tallow-chandlers, taking our daughter from the melting to get a puff of sea-air. Well, suppose that same person saw us afterwards, in the very best and grandest society; would he not be ten times less likely to know us in our fine traps, than if we had worn something in the same shape and fashion when he met us on the coach?"

"That's very true, my dear," said Mrs.

O'Donagough, "and late as it is, I think I shall take the hint, and make some little alteration in what I was going to wear. You understand the sort of thing, Patty, that your papa means, don't you, my dear?"

"Yes, to be sure I do, and you shall see if I can't make a good sight of myself!" replied Miss Patty, starting away from the tea-table; and seizing upon one of the bonnets that lay on the top of a trunk ready for the morrow, she began to take out pins, and demolish bows at a great rate.

"My dear child, what are you about?" cried her mother; "you ain't going to waste all that good ribbon, I hope?"

"Waste it! How can you talk such nonsense, mama, as if that was what papa wanted? No, I won't waste it, but do just look here; don't I look like a vulgar dowdy?"

"Well, to be sure, fine feathers do make fine birds, there is no denying it," said Mrs. O'Donagough, looking with some mixture of vexation, at Martha's very successful attempt to make herself look a vulgar dowdy.

"Capital, girl!" cried her father, chuckling. "She is up to everything."

At an early hour the next morning, the active, enterprising, hopeful trio, were making as much noise in their little sitting-room as if a dozen ordinary persons were about to take their departure from it.

"Pray, pray don't set that box up on end! It has got both our best bonnets in it!" cried the elder lady.

"Oh, my! that's all the artificial flowers for mama and me!" screamed the young one, fiercely extricating a deal case from the hands of the maid, who was irreverently jerking it out of the way.

"Make the tea, can't you!" bawled Mr. O'Donagough to his wife. "The branch coach will be here in a minute, and I positively will not stir an inch till I have had my breakfast."

At length, however, they were snugly accommodated; father, mother, daughter, packages, and all; not only on the branch coach, but on the very vehicle itself that was to convey them to the goal of their wishes. But this was not

effected without some difficulty. Mrs. O'Donagough was large, and none of her adventures had hitherto accustomed her to such a degree of activity as was necessary to bring her to the place she was to occupy, so that the assistance of a man putting the last touch to the luggage on the roof, as well as that of Mr. O'Donagough, who was stationed below, was required to aid the operation. The young lady had skipped up with great agility, the moment her father indicated to her the place where she was to sit; and while her mama was mounting, she stood up, clapping her hands, and shouting with laughter, as she watched the difficult process. After this first impediment to their setting off had been overcome, however, nothing could be more prosperous or satisfactory than their journey; the whole family, each in their respective style, ably sustained the incognito which had been enjoined. Mr. O'Donagough, during the entire distance, preserved total silence. Mrs. O'Donagough talked a good deal, it being an exercise to which she was too much accustomed, to leave it off without great incon-

venience; but she so cautiously avoided every allusion to her own dignity, and so steadily abstained from addressing either of her companions by name, that a young Sussex farmer, who was the person to whom she chiefly addressed herself, would have been a very clever fellow, indeed, had her conversation left information of any kind upon his mind. Miss O'Donagough as steadily kept in view the part she had to perform, as either father or mother; but this did not prevent her from looking pretty constantly in the face of the young farmer, thinging, however, all the time, how very much handsomer her dear Jack was.

According to his usual system, Mr. O'Donagough, while appearing to consult his wife on many points with the most amiable conjugal confidence, had hitherto uttered nothing definitive respecting his projects on arriving at Brighton; and in this he acted wisely, as before he could be said to know what he intended himself, he had one or two little experiments to make, and one or two questions to ask.

The first words he had been heard to utter

since he placed himself beside his daughter, on the top of the vehicle, were spoken to that young lady as soon as herself and her ponderous mama were once more safely lodged on the pavement, and they ran thus, as he eyed the waiter, who came forth from the hotel at which the coach stopped.

"I suppose the thing you would like best to do just at present, would be to eat, wouldn't it?"

"Well done you, for a good guess, papa!" replied Miss Patty, in high glee, "and you couldn't be more right if I had been a glass-case, and you had seen through me. 'Tis good news hearing that word, isn't it, mama?"

"Indeed it is, Patty," replied Mrs. O'Donagough, "I feel perfectly sinking and exhausted. It is no joke travelling from London to Brighton, with nothing on earth to keep soul and body together, but a miserable dry sandwich of salt ham."

"Come, come, let's have no grumbling!" cried Mr. Donagough, turning sharply round from the waiter to whom he had been giving

his orders. "If you will follow this person up stairs, he will show you into a sitting-room, while I see after all your multitude of boxes."

"Grumbling?" muttered Mrs. O'Donagough in reply, "I should like to know where the most grumbling comes from!" But perceiving her husband to be no longer within hearing, she peaceably followed the waiter into the room to which he led them, and only indulged herself by saying, as he opened or shut the window—drew the blinds up or drew them down—or employed himself on some other of the numerous assiduities which denote the presence of a waiter, "Let everything in the way of refreshment which the gentleman has ordered be of the very best that the place can furnish; and let it all be brought with as little delay as possible—that is, I mean to say, instantly."

"Why, mama!" cried Miss Patty, who the instant the waiter had quitted the window, flew to throw it open as widely as the sash would permit, "this place is more lovely, ten times over, than even London itself! My! what a sight of beautiful full-dressed gentlemen I do

see crossing along at the bottom of the street! And such bonnets! I shall grow wild, I can tell you that, if I am kept in long, either for eating, or drinking, or anything else. Why there's officers by dozens, mama! Oh! my goodness! what a delightful place!"

Her indulgent mother did not long delay to station her own ample person beside the juvenile form of her delighted daughter; and so much was there within reach of their eager eyes, as they fearlessly thrust forward their heads and shoulders to obtain a view of the point where the street opened upon the Marine-parade, that, hungry as they were, the cold meat and porter arrived before they had more than once turned round their heads to look for them.

Mr. O'Donagough entered in the wake of the tray, and for some reason or other seemed in high good-humour. "Come along both of ye!" he exclaimed gaily. "The deuce is in it if you are not ready. 'Tis wonderful how quickly the sea air gets hold of one." And then seating himself before a prodigious mass of cold

beef, he began to handle the cutlass-like weapon which was placed beside it, with such skilful zeal that his fair companions seemed to forget for a while all earthly blessings, save such as he heaped upon the plates before them.

"And what do you think of Brighton, Miss Patty?" said he, as distinctly as his occupation would allow.

"It is a beautiful divine glory of a place, papa!" replied Patty; and I am sure I shall like it a monstrous deal better than London."

"It really does seem an enchanting spot, Donny," said his wife, setting down an empty beer-glass, of majestic size; "and if things go on well here, about the Huberts, and everything else, you know, I do hope and trust you will give us a decent lodging, and let us enjoy ourselves."

"I shall be able to tell you more about it, my dear, an hour hence," replied Mr. Allen O'Donagough, continuing to carve and to eat with a degree of celerity that not only showed his seaward appetite, but proved his time to be precious. "As soon as you have done eating

you must go into the room where I have had all the luggage stowed, and let us see what's what a little. You must unpack right away the trunk that has the things which came from the tailor's for me—and Patty, when you have done cramming, I'll get you to look out my shaving tackle; I shall want the key of the hatbox too. Come along, both of ye, there's good girls."

"Lor, papa! Do stop a moment. You never do care for tarts, like mama and me. 'Tisn't fair to take us away in the very midst of our treat," said Patty, making, however, no unnecessary delay as she spoke.

"You must stop a little if you please," added his wife, in like manner continuing her employment, with all possible activity, "'Tis such abominable extravagance to pay for things and not eat them."

Mr. Allen O'Donagough listened to reason, and continued to amuse himself with a crust of bread and cheese, till the last tartlet disappeared, when starting up he exclaimed, "Now for it, then—I want to be stirring, I promise you!"

"But to be sure you are not going to dress yourself in new clothes before you go out to look for lodgings, Mr. O'Donagough, are you? Patty and I must go as we are, I can tell you that," said Mrs. O'Donagough.

"I declare I will do no such thing mama!" cried the young lady, bursting into open rebellion; "I would no more go out and meet all those beautiful officers in that horrid bonnet and shawl, than I'd fly. I would rather be whipped a great deal."

"Nonsense, Patty!" replied her mother. "It is much better to do that, I can tell you, than to begin the thing half-and-half. You may be quite sure, my dear, that there is not one of them will know you again when they see you in your pink satin bonnet, and your beautiful pink scarf."

"Don't trouble yourselves to squabble any more about it, for you are not to go out with me at present, let your dress be what it may," said the gentleman.

"Not go out with you, O'Donagough?" exclaimed his wife, with equal disappointment

and surprise. "Why, you don't mean to take lodgings for us, without ever letting me see them?"

"No, my dear, of course, not for my eyes! I am not going to take lodgings, Mrs. O'Donagough, but only just to take a look at the place, and judge whether our taking lodgings here at all would be likely to answer or not."

Mrs. O'Donagough understood her husband's voice, and knew that he most certainly would go out alone. So, without further opposition, she prepared to obey his behests, and having done her part in finding the various articles he wanted, left the room, followed by her daughter, without making any further observations on his mode of proceeding. But though she made the chamber-door in some degree slam after her, the sitting-room window soon restored her good-humour, and she and her daughter continued to recreate themselves by gazing through it, at all things within reach of their eyes, wholly insensible to the progress of time.

How long they had remained thus pleasantly

engaged they would have been at a loss to say, when at length their attention was drawn from without, by the opening of the door behind them. They both turned their heads at the same moment, and saw a gentleman enter the room, whom, at the first glance, neither of them recognised—yet, nevertheless, it was no other than Mr. O'Donagough himself. He was dressed very handsomely in a suit, which though not exactly mourning, and not exactly clerical, might, at the first glance, have been mistaken for either. But the circumstance which, though seemingly trifling, made the change in his general appearance the most remarkable, was his having substituted a white muslin cravat, without any shirt-collar being visible, for his usual black stock, above which was wont to arise two well-stiffened ears of dimensions considerably larger than common. This, and the metamorphosis his hair had undergone, which when he left the room had been "sable silvered," but when he re-entered it, presented a wavy, yet closely-fitted outline of locks, nearly flaxen, made him look so totally

unlike himself, that when at length his wife and daughter became aware of his identity, they both burst into violent laughter.

"What on earth, O'Donagough, have you been doing to yourself?" cried his wife, as soon as she recovered the power of speaking. "You look fifty times more like a methodist parson than anything else. Your coat, and all that, is very new, and very nice, certainly; but I can't say I approve the change at all. What with your shaving, and all the rest, you have altogether lost the look of a man of fashion, which I used to admire so much in you."

Mr. O'Donagough looked steadily in his wife's face for half a moment, and then said very gravely, "I am not so young as I have been, my dear, any more than yourself; and I am inclined to think now, that a respectable appearance is more to be desired than a dashing one."

The steady look was not removed for another half-moment after he had finished speaking, and when it was, his wife had not only ceased to laugh, but said in accents quite as demure as

his own, "I am sure I am quite of the same opinion, Mr. O'Donagough. When one is going to mix with families of distinction, there is nothing so important as an air of dignity and —and—of superior style and character, and all that sort of thing. You look very nice indeed, Mr. O'Donagough, and I promise you I, for one, shall be exceedingly angry with Patty, if ever she gives a look, or says a word, or giggles and titters, or gives any sign whatever, of your appearing different from what you used to do."

"You may depend upon it, my dear, Patty knows a great deal better than to do anything half so vulgar and silly. She certainly knows very little about most things as yet; but she is not such a fool either as to laugh at her own father, or try to make other people laugh at him on account of his dress or anything else. If I am laughed at, she will be quite sure that no very great notice will be taken of her."

"You need not be afraid of me," said Patty, turning again to the window. "Papa knows how to take care of himself, and what will go down best with the grandee cousins you talk

so much about, there's no doubt about that, and so he don't take it into his head that I ought to look like an old quiz too, I shall say nothing to nobody about him."

"That's a first-rate girl, Mrs. O'D.; and if fair play is given her, I'll lay my life on it, she will make her fortune," said the well-satisfied father.

"It is not the first time *that* has been said of her, my dear," replied his wife, with a nod of the head that meant a great deal. "It is not a little that will content me for her, I promise you. But get along, Donny, don't waste any more time talking—I shall be dying to see you back again, and know something about what's to become of us next."

Mr. O'Donagough obeyed her, but said nothing; and his wife being rather tired of standing, drew a chair to the window, and seating herself beside the still unwearied Patty, beguiled the time by teaching her how to know colonels, majors, captains, and lieutenants, by their uniforms.

Mr. O'Donagough meanwhile, with a hat of

rather larger dimensions than was at that time usual, and a stout elderly-looking walking-stick, sallied forth to perambulate the streets of Brighton, for the first time for rather more than fifteen years. Had he, however, been a greater stranger there still, he might have taken less pains in preparing for this expedition. But the time had been when few places knew him better; and before he could conscientiously feel himself justified in indulging the wife of his bosom by once more taking up his quarters there, he deemed it necessary to ascertain how lasting might be the impression he had left on the minds of the permanent inhabitants. Here, too, as in the familiar purlieus of Leicester-square, there were haunts over the nature and destination of which, time seemed to have no power. Where billiard-balls rolled in days of yore, he found them rolling still; the same sights, and the same sounds, greeted him in the self-same places; and so little changed was the aspect of these minor features, that till he looked more widely round him, and perceived that unless brick and mortar had obeyed the

commands of some enchanted lamp, years must indeed have passed since last he stood there, he could almost have fancied that he had pocketed his last Brighton winnings but yesterday.

Though very far, in general, from being the plaything of his own imagination, Mr. Allen O'Donagough stood hesitating for a moment, whether or not he should enter a certain doorway, leading to what he remembered to have been the most approved rendezvous for gentlemen of his own class, when Brighton was one of his many homes. It was not because he feared the keen eye of a marker—when much less carefully equipped for such an encounter, he had stood this test triumphantly (despite even his "*pretty hazard*"). But fifteen years before, there dwelt in that dusky mansion, a pair of the very brightest eyes that had ever looked upon him. The light young figure too, and the gay ready smile of her to whom they belonged, were as fresh in his memory as if he had left these also but yesterday. He had made this reckless thoughtless thing believe

he loved her; and in return, she had given but too certain proof that she loved him. The house before which he stood had been her father's. Did she dwell there still? and would she know him?

These were the questions which caused the middle-aged, respectable-looking, Mr. Allen O'Donagough, to pause and hesitate before a door, which he ought to have entered quickly, or have passed with scorn. He felt that he might be exposing himself needlessly to a great risk, but yet the trial might be worth making, for, if successful, he conceived it impossible he could ever be tormented by such doubts and fears again.

This consideration at length nerved him to the enterprise, and he went in. There was the same scent of ill-extinguished lamps as he advanced, and as it seemed, the identical much-worn oil-cloth under his feet; there was, too, within a glass enclosure at the foot of the stair-case, a gaily dressed female. It was there, exactly there, that his bright-eyed Susan used to sit; it was there he had seen her for the first

time; and there, little as she guessed it at the moment, and little, perhaps, as he himself intended it should be so, he had looked upon her the last. He now stared at the stout, gaudily-decked woman before him, and though feeling something, perhaps, a little akin to disappointment, it was a relief to know that there was not any danger to be run from deep impressions on poor Susan's memory.

"They are playing up stairs as usual, I suppose?" said he, stopping before the open window-frame, at which sat the capacious barmaid.

The woman started, and looked up, but as soon as her eyes encountered the respectable figure of Mr. O'Donagough, she looked down again upon the page on which she was writing, and quietly replied, "Yes, sir."

That glance, however, which had sufficed to deceive her, had undeceived him. They were Susan's eyes, and none other, that had looked upon him; and though girlish delicacy of every kind was sadly merged, and lost in most

coarse womanhood, he felt perfectly sure of the identity.

"Is the room crowded, ma'am?" he resumed, willing again to see those beautiful eyes, so altered, yet the same.

Again the woman started, and before she answered drew aside a curtain that obscured the light of a window beside her, when the last light of the setting sun fell full upon his face. But this instead of producing danger, most effectually saved him from it; the Susan of former days again looked steadily at him for a moment, and then slightly smiling, probably at the suspicion to which his voice had given birth, she replied, "Upon my word, sir, I don't know."

As if affronted by the abruptness of the reply, he turned suddenly away, and walked out.

"She does not know me," he murmured as he went; "and if she does not, no one will."

There was, perhaps, one little grain of mortification, mixed in the full bushel of satisfaction produced by this experiment; but if so, our

adventurer was too wise a man to sift for it, With an alert and active step he repaired to the more fashionable part of the gay town, and within a little more than one hour of the time he had left them, Mr. O'Donagough returned to his family with the agreeable intelligence that he had seen some very handsome apartments on the Marine Parade, and that they might take possession of them immediately, if they approved of them.

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## CHAPTER XI.

UNEXPECTED NEWS—MAKING VIRTUE FROM NECESSITY—A SATISFACTORY CORRESPONDENCE—PREPARATION—A MORNING VISIT—DRAMATIC EFFECTS.

A DOMESTIC-LOOKING party, consisting of a very lovely young woman and two children, with another lady, who might, perhaps, be their governess, were seated upon one of the rare masses of stone, which, in default of better, are at Brighton called rocks; when the occupation of each was suspended by the approach of a gentleman, who had just descended a flight of steps, leading down the cliff. The lovely lady ceased to converse with the more homely one, who sat beside her; the youngest child suffered a whole frock-load of marine-treasures, to fall again amidst the shingles, whence she had culled them, while she darted

forward to greet the intruder; and the elder one, who was too tall to be called a little girl, and too slight and juvenile in appearance to be classed as a great one, shut up the book she was reading, and joyously exclaimed, "Papa!"

"How very cool and comfortable you all look here!" said General Hubert—for he it was who drew near; "and how extremely skilful you have been in finding out the only 'coigne of vantage' that could produce sufficient shade to shelter you!"

"And it produces sufficient to shade you too, Montague," said his wife, making room for him between herself and her companion. "I am so glad you are come before the East-Indiaman is out of sight! Did you ever see a more stately creature? How beautifully one half of her canvass catches the sunshine, while the remainder is as dark as night from that little black canopy of a cloud, that so mysteriously hovers over her! This is certainly the most beautiful day for lights and shades that we have had yet."

"Oh, my poor Agnes!" said the General,

heaving a deep sigh, but with so comic an expression of countenance, as only to make his wife smile.

"What means that tender sigh, my dear?" said she, looking at him with an evident expectation of hearing something that would amuse her. But General Hubert shook his head, and replied in a voice at least half serious.

"I am very much afraid, dearest, that I bring news which will vex you."

"What do you mean, Hubert?" cried Agnes, a little impatiently; "it cannot be anything the matter about the boys, or you would not look so half-disposed to jest as you do."

"Probably not, Agnes. No, dearest, I have heard nothing about the boys. But—"

And here he stopped, turning his eyes at the same time upon the two little girls, and then with a smile upon their governess. This lady returning the smile, rose instantly, and stretching out a hand to either pupil said, "This is lazy work, young ladies; remember we have had no walk yet."

The children, or at any rate, the elder one, looked a little inclined to linger, and hear what papa was going to say; but the habit of obedience seemed too strong to be broken, and after one short questioning look that received no encouragement, she accepted the offered hand and the trio set off together, leaving Mrs. Hubert waiting for the disclosure which her husband was evidently come on purpose to make, with a curiosity that seemed to increase in exact proportion to its delay.

"I do not like sending that dear excellent Miss Wilmot off so cavalierly," said the General, watching the retreating party; "nevertheless I am much obliged to her for understanding my look so readily; for I should scarcely like to trust to your philosophy, Agnes, the reception of the news I bring while Elizabeth was here."

"But nobody is here now, my dear General!" she replied; "and I implore you to tell me instantly what this terrible news is."

The General put his hand into his waistcoat-pocket and drew forth from it two visiting-

cards, and a three-cornered note. Agnes stretched forth her hand—received them—and read aloud—

"MRS. A. O'DONAGOUGH.
"MISS O'DONAGOUGH.

*East Cliff.*"

and again on the other card—

"MR. A. O'DONAGOUGH.

*East Cliff.*"

"Montague! Are you jesting with me?" were the first words uttered by Agnes after reading these most unexpected names.

"No, truly am I not, Agnes," he replied. "I took these cards and the note you hold in your hand, which was left with them, from the hall-table, as I entered the house ten minutes ago; and, guessing whereabouts I should find you, set off again instantly to impart the news they convey. But do not look so really and truly frightened, Agnes! Aunt Barnaby is Aunt Barnaby no longer."

Agnes shook her head: "Ah! Hubert, you know better than that!

A rose by any other name—

My dear, dear husband! How will you be able to bear it?"

"You shall see, Agnes; things are most delightfully changed with me, dear love, since the days you seem to remember so distinctly, when the Barnaby, I will not deny it, had power very considerably to shake my nerves. But pray read your note; I am a little curious, I own, to see how she introduces herself."

Mrs. Hubert opened the note, and read aloud as follows:

"You will easily believe, my beloved Agnes, that amidst all the delightful feelings produced by returning to my native country, the hope of once more pressing you to my heart predominates. Gracious Heaven what a moment it will be for me when I present to you my darling child! and when I receive yours in my arms!—when may this be, my dearest niece? Of course neither Mr. O'Donagough, or myself, or our sweet girl, have any engage-

ments that would interfere for a moment with our ardent wish of seeing you and yours. I shall wait with the greatest impatience till I hear from you, and trust that you will fix no very distant hour, my beloved Agnes, for our meeting. Mr. O'Donagough charges me to present his respectful compliments to General Hubert; and Martha, whose young eyes beam with affection whenever your names are mentioned, murmurs gently in my ear, 'Send my kind love, mama, to all my dear young cousins.' For some few lingering hours, then, adieu, my dear sister's own daughter! and believe me ever your devotedly attached aunt,

"MARTHA COMPTON O'DONAGOUGH."

Having finished this epistle, Mrs. Hubert put it into the hands of her husband, as if it were impossible that he could have fully received all its terrible meaning from her delivery of it. As she did this, the expression of her fair face was so deplorably tragical, and so humbly deprecative, that the General, though somewhat chagrined himself at this unexpected

announcement, could not retain his gravity, but laughed aloud.

"And you make a jest of it, Montague!" she exclaimed; "is that laugh genuine? or is it only feigned, to prevent my perceiving how deeply annoyed you are?"

"Not feigned, upon my word and honour, Agnes. Nor do I believe that Aunt Betsy herself, though generally grave enough upon the subject of Mrs. Barnaby, could refrain from joining me were she here, to see your piteous countenance. How can you be so foolish, my dear wife? How can the elder lady, or her young daughter, or her very reverend husband, possess any real power over our happiness now? Send her word, dear, that you will call upon her at two o'clock to-morrow; I will not let you go to-day, for you look fit for nothing but a gallop over the downs. Come along, Agnes, I'll have the horses out directly."

The gloom which had rested on her beautiful countenance, was chased by a smile as bright and sudden in its influence, as the sunbeams whose effects she had just been studying.

"Oh, my dear husband, how I do love you!" said she, gaily taking his arm, and moving towards the stairs in the cliff with a step that seemed in unison with the recovered lightness of her heart. "I hope you do not think my dismay at receiving this unexpected news arises from my own personal distaste to Aunt Barnaby's society? I do assure you, that were it not for the dread I feel lest you should be annoyed by her, somewhat in the same style as I have witnessed formerly, I should not feel the slightest displeasure at it. Perhaps, even, I might be almost able to persuade myself that I should like to see her. Her little girl I really do wish very much to see. She must be within a few months of the same age as Elizabeth, and notwithstanding all my greatness, Hubert, as your honoured wife, I have no inclination to forget how nearly they are related."

"No more have I, sweet Agnes; and it was precisely for that reason, I gave the look to Miss Wilmot, which made her lead away the children. I suspected that you would betray

a little more wonder, and a little less joy, on first receiving the intelligence, than might be easily forgotten. This would have been unfair. I should not particularly wish Elizabeth to make Mrs. A. O'Donagough her model; but I see no reason why a little girl of her own age, who must have been brought up simply at least, and without any great pretension, in the remote shades of New South Wales, should not obtain such a share of her love and good graces, as her near relationship gives her a right to expect. So torment yourself no more, Agnes, about my miseries on the subject. I could feel well inclined to laugh at the vehemence of my own feelings, in days of yore, on the subject of this poor lady, and do not, I assure you, anticipate the least danger of a relapse."

"I often think, Montague," she replied, "that you have some mystical mode of reading my heart. It so perpetually happens, that you do and say exactly the things I most wish, even when circumstances would lead me to expect something different. But shall I con-

fess that I now feel perfectly ashamed of myself from the excess of vexation this three-cornered epistle caused me? solely, I believe, from its expressions of familiar affection. I was foolish enough to think, Hubert, that you would not like your daughter to be claimed as a relative by this obscure young cousin."

"Why, considering Agnes, how many superlatively fine relations you have done my daughter the honour of giving her—Nesbitts and Stephensons without end—I really think it would be unreasonable to complain of her being claimed as kindred by one humble lassie who has neither learned her steps from a French opera-dancer, nor her singing from an Italian opera-singer. I am by no means certain that our simple Elizabeth may not like her best."

This conversation brought them to their own door; on reaching which a servant was despatched to the stables to order their horses, and while they were waited for, Mrs. Hubert, after a little further consultation with her husband, wrote the following note:—

"My dear Aunt,

"Accept my best congratulations upon your return to England after an absence of so many years, and let me fix two o'clock to-morrow for repeating these congratulations in person. I feel quite anxious to see my young cousin, who must be, if I mistake not, about the same age as my eldest girl. I hope they will be good friends and playfellows.

"General Hubert begs to join his request to mine, that Mr. O'Donagough, yourself, and Martha, would give us the pleasure of your company at dinner on Thursday at six o'clock.

"Believe me, my dear Aunt,

"Your affectionate niece,

"AGNES HUBERT."

This note approved and despatched, Mrs. Hubert, with a lightened spirit, mounted her beautiful mare, and gallopped for a couple of hours over the Sussex downs with as much enjoyment as if "Aunt Barnaby" had not been in existence.

Her note reached its destination safely, and

was received by the whole of the O'Donagough family in council. Mr. O'Donagough, though not exactly confessing that he remained at home on purpose, contrived to be in the drawing-room when the servant of the house entered with it; and Martha, who, from the reiterated harangues of her mama on the subject, had conceived a very distinct idea, that most of her pleasures, and all her consequence, depended on the manner in which "the Huberts" received them, no sooner saw a smart footman, bearing a note in his hand, ring at the bell, than springing back from the station she constantly occupied at the window, she exclaimed, "Here it comes, mama!—such a footman!—all over silver lace! I'll bet a dollar it is to ask us to come and drink tea with them."

"Be quiet, Martha! Don't scream so loud," said Mr. O'Donagough.

"Oh! how my poor heart beats!" cried his wife, forcibly compressing that part of her person wherein it was lodged. "Dearest—" Agnes! she would have added, but a feeling of doubt and caution checked her, and compress-

sing her lips, and assuming an air of dignified composure, she suddenly resolved to express no further affection for Mrs. General Hubert till it was ascertained how she was likely to be welcomed in return.

The lively Martha gave a prodigious jump the instant the drawing-room door opened, and clutched the important note from the maid-servant's hand.

"Now, who'll know the news first, I wonder?" she cried, triumphantly holding her prize above her head.

"How dare you behave so, Martha!" said Mrs. O'Donagough, hastily rising, and approching her daughter in a manner that made it evident there would be a battle for the note if the young lady yielded it not unresistingly. But the matter was immediately decided by the authoritative voice of Mr. O'Donagough himself, who, with more anxiety than he intended should appear, sat picking his teeth, and pretending to read a newspaper.

"No nonsense, if you please, Miss Patty! Give your mother the note INSTANTLY." And

instantly the note trembled beneath the agitated fingers of Mrs. O'Donagough.

"—Best congratulation!—anxious to see young cousin!—good friends!—General Hubert!—dinner on Thursday!—Oh! my dear Agnes!—my darling, darling niece!" she exclaimed, falling back in her chair in very violent emotion. "How I dote upon her!—Was there ever any thing so sweet, O'Donagough?"

This demand was addressed to her husband, in consequence of his having caught the note as it fell from her hands as she clasped them in ecstasy after the hasty perusal of it. "What a fool I have been," she continued, with something between a sob and a laugh, "to let all your nonsensical doubts bother me as they have done! Nobody, of course, but myself can possibly know what Agnes and I have been to each other! Let me have the note again, Donny!—dear darling creature! How touching—how sweet her language is! I am sure you will dote upon her, O'Donagough; and remember, my dear, that all she is, she owes to me. I formed her mind and manners; and I

think when you know her better, you will confess that she does me no discredit."

"Dear me, papa," cried the young lady, "how you do spell it and spell it! Isn't it my turn now, mama? She's my cousin, papa, more than she is yours, you know."

"The lady is my niece, Patty, and not my cousin," replied her father, passing his hand across the lower part of his face to conceal a smile, arising probably from a greater variety of incongruous and amusing recollections than either of his companions could understand. "The note," he added, "is a very agreeable note as far as it goes—and I presume you have no engagement, Mrs. O'Donagough, that will prevent our having the pleasure of dining with General Hubert on Thursday next?"

"I rather think not," she answered in the same tone of comic gravity. "Nor do I intend to be from home at two o'clock tomorrow."

"Mayn't I see the note, mama?" cried Patty, almost whimpering. "I do think it is the hardest thing that ever was, you two keep-

ing it all to yourselves, and making your jokes about it, and I standing by as if I was a baby all the time."

"Give her the note, dear Donny," said Mrs. O'Donagough, "I don't wonder that she is longing for it. There, miss! read that, and rejoice—though you can't know yet one-half a quarter of the difference it may make to you."

Miss O'Donagough received the precious paper from her father, and depositing herself with a good deal of vehemence in the corner of a sofa (for her temper had been chafed by the delay) began to study it. Though not testifying equal ecstasy to her mother, she perused the first few lines with a well-satisfied air; and when she came to the phrase, "I feel quite anxious to see my young cousin," she looked up with a smile, and gave a sidelong nod with her head that seemed to say, "I count for something in the business, at any rate." But when again throwing her eyes upon the note, she read the words, "I hope they will be good friends and playfellows," her

colour arose to crimson, and mounted to her very eyes. For a moment she swelled in silence, and then recovering breath, exclaimed,

"Your cousin, or niece, or whatever she is, may be as great and as grand as she will—but she is a born fool, and I know I shall hate her."

"Hoity, toity! Miss Patty. Pray what is the matter now?" inquired her mother with very sincere astonishment.

"Matter, indeed! I wonder, ma'am, that you can bear to have me treated in such a way What does she mean by saying that her girl and me may be playfellows? A precious girl she must be too, if she *is* as old as me, for her mother to talk in that way, as if she was an idiot, or a baby."

"It is no good for you to fluster yourself in that way, Patty, about nothing at all," replied Mrs. Donagough. "There are very few English girls, you must remember, as tall and womanly as you, at fourteen. And another thing is, I can tell you, that it is not every mother that chooses to bring her daughter for-

ward as I do. Most ladies, indeed, keep their girls back as much as possible."

"What, the old ladies are jealous of 'em, I suppose," replied Patty, with an expressive toss of the head. "Nasty, unnatural, old beasts! I tell you I know I shall hate this good-for-nothing old woman, who tries to make believe that her daughter is a baby, to make herself seem young. It's downright horrid, isn't it, papa?"

"I tell you what Patty," replied her father, laughing; "if all girls were like you, the mothers would find it pretty hard work to keep 'em back I fancy. However, you had better not put yourself in a passion about nothing. Perhaps your grandee cousin is *not* so old as you are—and her mother may have forgot all about your age, I dare say."

"Elizabeth Hubert is exactly five months younger than Patty," observed Mrs. O'Donagough; "but it is like enough she may be but a peaking little girl. Agnes was but a poor thread of a thing when she married."

"I don't care the split of a straw what she

is," returned her daughter. "Old or young, little or big, it's all one to me—only I wouldn't advise 'em to set me to be her playfellow, as she calls it—I'll teach her queer plays, if she does, I can tell her."

This little puff of disagreeable excitement blown away—a process greatly facilitated by Mrs. O'Donagough's judiciously alluding to the dresses it would be necessary to prepare for Thursday, nothing could be more agreeable than the strain of prophecy into which the conversation fell. All the sanguine hopes and expectations of the parents respecting the numerous advantages they contemplated, from an intercourse so auspiciously begun, were freely expressed before their child, who fully proved, by several intelligent remarks, that she was as competent to understand the subject as either of them. One observation alone was muttered with conjugal mystery by Mrs. O'Donagough, into the ear of her husband; and it ran thus:—

"Do you feel any misgivings, Donny, about the sharp eyes of Agnes?" To which he most

satisfactorily replied by snapping his fingers with such vivacity, as to produce a sound clear as a castanet; while at the same time he returned the mutter, by pronouncing the single word, "Stuff!"

Though the toilet of the following morning did not, as Mrs. O'Donagough observed, signify a cent in comparison of that to be worn at the dinner-party, still it was not altogether neglected. At about twenty minutes before two, they all three met in the drawing-room, with eyes that seemed to challenge the examination and judgment of each other.

The first expression of applause was elicited by the smooth precision of Mr. O'Donagough's new wig; the full value of which his wife seemed to feel at that moment for the first time. "It's quite perfect, Donny," said she, "I never saw anything equal to it in all my life. Why, your own mother—I mean that you look very nice and respectable indeed, and I like and approve it very much, Mr. O'Donagough;"—which name, with the emphasis she then gave it, as fully explained to her husband

all that was passing in her mind, as if she had discoursed upon it for an hour.

He gave her a nod to show that she was understood, and then a second nod to himself, as he looked in the glass and felt conscious how perfectly well he deserved her approbation both expressed and implied.

The appearance of Patty was the next object of attention; and on this subject Mr. O'Donagough was eloquent, cordially returning the admiration he had received.

"I hope you are contented with the looks of your girl, Mrs. O'D.?" said he. "There is no denying, ladies, that you know how to spend your money. What is this beautiful-looking stuff that her gown is made of?—Is it satin?"

"No, my dear," replied his wife; "it certainly is not satin. Twenty pounds between us, though a very pretty present, would not give us morning gowns made of satin. But it is a very beautiful manufacture, Donny, which I like exceedingly, it takes the colour so bright. It is nothing in the world but cotton, with just a few threads of silk, you see, run up and

down, to catch the eye. But if it was the richest satin ever made, the colour could not be more beautifully brilliant. Darling!—She looks like a full-blown jonquil, doesn't she, my dear?"

"She looks like an uncommon fine girl," replied Mr. O'Donagough. "Her eyes are like stars—I never saw them look so bright before—and her fine long dark curls are as handsome as your own used to be, my dear, when I first met you at ———. The first time I saw you, I mean."

"You are quite right, my love, excepting that her hair curls naturally, it is exactly like mine—and I must say she does look very handsome to-day."

"Egad!" resumed the father, "I don't know what you have done to her; her complexion looks so beautiful—to be sure you have not—" and here he imitated, with his hand applied to his face, the delicate action employed to rouge a lady's cheek. "You must not do that, my dear. It is all very well, and very becoming at about twice her age—but she don't want it yet."

Mrs. O'Donagough said nothing in reply, but employed herself in settling the collar of her own embroidery that finished the dress of her daughter—while Patty turned aside her head and laughed.

"But you say nothing about *me*, my dear," said the mother, after having completed the pinchings and smoothings of Patty's dress; "tell me how you like my cap, and my gown, and my *fichu*, and my cuffs, and my bag—in short, tell me, honestly, Donny, what you think of me, all over?"

"Lor, mama! what an odd question!" cried her lively daughter, laughing, and turning round to assist in the scrutiny. "I'll defy him to say that you ain't very nicely dressed—though perhaps, as to *all over*, he may say that you look monstrous big."

"I'll tell you what, Miss Patty, you will be half as big again before you are as old as me, take my word for it," replied Mrs. O'Donagough, a little chafed at the remark. "However," she added, with more complacency, "I am not so big as the duchess that we met this

morning on the Pier—and I see so many large women here, all in their own carriages, that I am perfectly contented to be fat—I am quite sure it is the fashion."

"I am quite sure of it too, my dear," replied her husband. "Besides," he gallantly added, "when ladies are of as fine a height, and as nobly built as you are, they can carry off a great deal of fat without being at all the worse for it."

At this moment the bell of the house-door was heard to ring. Mrs. O'Donagough put her hand to her heart. "Oh! good gracious! Here they are!—Come and stand by me, Patty, that I may present you to her directly. I hope she has not got her husband with her, Donny! I dread the sight of that man."

"Hold your tongue! Don't be such a fool! They are on the stairs."

He was right. They *were* on the stairs, they were at the door—and the next moment they were in the room. Neither Mr. or Mrs. O'Donagough would have known Agnes had they met her by chance. Her appearance was

indeed most strikingly changed; yet though in a different style, she was perhaps more lovely than they had ever before seen her. She had gained at least an inch in height after her marriage, and the slight girl was now filled out, and rounded into the perfect symmetry of womanhood. "What a delicate creature!" was the exclamation she had often drawn forth as Agnes Willoughby—and "What an elegant creature!" was the phrase which invariably followed her now. The exquisite features too, though still the same in outline, were changed, and even improved as to their general contour. And the expressive eyes, which formerly seemed to covet the shelter of their own fringed lids, and to speak, as it were, but in whispers of the treasure of intellect within, now, appearing to gather courage from looking on the husband who was rarely long together absent from her, showed in every glance a sort of ingenuous confidence of mind, by which a physiognomist might read the purity, simplicity, and strength of her character.

In her hand she led a slight young thing, as

thin as a greyhound, who, though tall for thirteen and a half, nevertheless looked perhaps younger than she was. Her silken brown hair hung low, in clusters of thick curls round her neck; and her peculiarly simple white dress, with its plain *pélerine*, and the seaworthy Leghorn bonnet tied closely with a ribbon of its own colour, under her chin, gave her decidedly the air of a child. Behind them followed General Hubert, who showed that a fine person, a noble expression of countenance, a military carriage, and graceful address, may altogether constitute a very handsome man, even though the lofty forehead be bald, and the thin curls that are left, sprinkled with silver.

Notwithstanding the entire absence of every species of affectation or pretension which so remarkably distinguished the manners of Mrs. Hubert, there was something in her general air and appearance which effectually checked all approaches to familiarity in those who were not privileged to use it—and, to say the truth, it would have been difficult to find any gentle-

man and lady whose appearance would have placed Mr. Allen O'Donagough less at his ease than those who now entered his apartment. He bowed low, as he stood behind his wife but with a movement that caused him to retreat, rather than advance. Patty, however, fearlessly opened her large eyes upon the strangers, and having no European scale of classification in her head, felt little daunted by encountering an aspect and dèmeanour altogether new to her; so entirely, indeed, did she "possess her soul," as they walked up the room, as mentally to ejaculate, "Well, if that lanky thing is my fine cousin, I shan't mind her a bit. She won't put my nose out, any how. What a bonnet!—my!"

But it was not to speculations such as occupied the minds of either her husband or her child that Mrs. O'Donagough gave way.—It was, as she would have expressed it, the heart that spoke, and not the judgment, when she rushed forward, and opening her expansive arms, enclosed within them the graceful, yet embarrassed Mrs. Hubert. So long indeed did

she hold her there, that the bystanders felt embarrassed too, not well knowing what to do with their eyes, or how to perform their own parts in a scene of such deep interest.

At length, however, the elder lady released the younger one from her strict embrace, and then retiring a step, stood gazing at her with clasped hands, and head advanced, as nearly as possible like a devotee offering adoration before a favourite shrine.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Donagough, "do I indeed behold my sister's child?" A very well-looking pocket-handkerchief, with its laced corner protruding, as if instinct with sympathy, from her bag, was here drawn forth, and did its duty well. "Oh! my dearest Agnes, I can hardly believe my eyes!—So lovely still, and yet so greatly altered! Oh! how my heart has longed for this dear moment! But I must not be thus selfish, thus absorbed! Mr. O'Donagough, let me present you to my dear niece.—General Hubert, forgive me, if at first I could see nothing but your charming wife!—I hope I see you well;

permit me to present my husband to you—Mr. O'Donagough, General Hubert—General Hubert, Mr. O'Donagough—and this is your child, Agnes!—Dear creature!—How excessively like the General!" And then, whether tempted by the resemblance, or by the fond feelings of a great-aunt, she very nearly caught the young lady from the ground, and pressed her so closely to her bosom, as to produce an involuntary "Oh!" from the lips of the nearly "spoilt child." This over, Mrs. O'Donagough next turned to her own daughter, though the last, not the least important of her evolutions, and taking her red young hand, placed it in the delicately-gloved palm of Mrs. Hubert. That lady, as in duty bound, kissed her cousin—but her long ringlets, and her fine colour, her large bright eyes, and her magnificent gown, altogether brought Aunt Betsy, and all her peculiar notions, to her mind so forcibly, that she almost trembled as she remembered that this most dear relation was expected to pay them a visit at Brighton, almost immediately.

"But mercy on me! how I let you stand!" cried Mrs. O'Donagough, perfectly satisfied that the earnest look given both by the General and his lady to her daughter, proceeded from admiring astonishment. "Let us sit down, dearest Agnes;" and marshalling her and her daughter, who still held tightly by her hand, to the sofa, placed herself on a chair before it; while the General, bowed into an arm-chair beside it by Mr. O'Donagough, found himself under the necessity of making conversation that might suit the habits and prejudices of his host, concerning whose strict conformity to the methodist persuasion, he felt not the least doubt.

"You have been long absent from this country, sir?" said the General.

A slight twitching might have been perceptible about the mouth of Mr. Allen O'Donagough, as he listened to this question, but he instantly recovered himself and replied, "It has indeed been a long absence, General Hubert."

Without either snuffling, lisping, or in any

other obvious and ordinary manner altering his voice, there was something in Mr. Allen O'Donagough's manner of saying these few words, that made his wife, notwithstanding her earnest attention to what her darling Agnes was saying, look up at him with surprise. But she was a quick-witted, intelligent woman, and half a moment's consideration enabled her to recollect why it was he spoke now as she had never heard him speak before. It was less than half a smile that passed over her face, as cause and effect thus became perceptible to her, but this half-smile spoke a whole world of conjugal admiration.

Mrs. O'Donagough now obtained sufficient mastery over the first burst of her emotions, to look at the daughter of Agnes with some attention. From her youth upwards she had studied beauty, both male and female, too sedulously, not to perceive under the close straw bonnet, a promise at least of good regular features, and something more than a promise of remarkably fine eyes. Nevertheless, on the whole, the examination awakened no maternal jealousy. She could not for a moment entertain a doubt

as to which was the handsomest, her daughter, or her great-niece. There sat her charming Patty, all glow, all brightness, in the very perfection of that undeniable "*beauté de diable*" which rarely, indeed, fails to illuminate the features of a womanly girl of fourteen; while beside her sat Elizabeth Hubert, pale, and by no means particularly fair, and with a countenance unawakened to all the thousand little conscious *agaceries*, which are sure to play and sparkle about such eyes and lips as those of Martha O'Donagough. Moreover, she looked such a mere child, that any comparison between them seemed quite preposterous.

"What a poor little weasel of a girl!" thought the well-pleased Mrs. O'Donagough, as she looked at her; "and her mother reckoned such a prodigious beauty too! Well to be sure, it is impossible not to feel something like triumph at the difference." Such were her thoughts, but all she uttered of them was, "Is this dear child your eldest girl, my dearest Agnes?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Hubert, "she is my eldest girl—but we have two boys older."

"Oh! yes—I remember. And this dear creature, then, is your Elizabeth, for whom you told me General Hubert's aunt, Lady Elizabeth Norris, and your own great-aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Compton, stood godmothers."

"Yes: this is Elizabeth."

"Is she in good health, my dearest Agnes?"

"Perfectly so."

"She is so *very* pale and thin! isn't she?"

"Nothing can be thinner, certainly—but we do not reckon her particularly pale. None of our children are fresh-coloured—but they have all excellent health."

"Then, my dear love, you must be contented with that—which after all is the first of blessings, and of infinitely more real importance, than all the beauty in the world. But, to be sure, she is the youngest-looking creature of her age that I ever saw. Who would believe, Agnes, that there was not more than five months difference in age between your girl and mine."

"No one, certainly," replied Mrs. Hubert with a smile.

"Is it possible!" said General Hubert, who

found it rather difficult to keep up a conversation with his sanctified-looking host; "is it possible, that Miss O'Donagough is not more than five months older than Elizabeth?"

"That is all, General, I assure you," replied Mrs. O'Donagough. "But the air of Sydney, you know, is counted the finest in the world, and I think that is likely to have a great deal to do with the improvement of children. But your dear girl is not very short neither—only she looks so little and childish-like compared to Patty. However, that is a fault that will mend every day—won't it dear?"

Elizabeth on being thus addressed, smiled, though without speaking, and the beauty of that sweet smile perfectly startled the critical Mrs. O'Donagough.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed with very blunt sincerity, "how pretty she is when she smiles! Oh, hear! that is so like poor Sophy!"

"Is she indeed like my mother, aunt?" said Mrs. Hubert, with some emotion.

"The smile is exactly like her," replied Mrs. O'Donagough. "And your mother was very

slight, too; but nothing like so little as Elizabeth, at her age."

"We never reckoned Elizabeth so very little," said the General, laughing; "but rather the contrary. Do let the young ladies stand up together—I know that is a very regular and orthodox ceremony, which always ought to be performed when cousins meet for the first time; and, moreover, I doubt if the English lass be not the taller of the two."

"Stand up, Martha!" said Mr. Allen O'Donagough with much solemnity.

The young lady obeyed; but there was a little toss of the head, and a little curl of the lip, that spoke, involuntarily perhaps, the scorn which the idea of any sort of measurement between herself and her cousin created.

"Come, Elizabeth," cried the General.

Elizabeth stood up, and yielded herself smiling and blushing to the hands of her father, who having himself untied her bonnet and laid it aside, placed her back to back with her cousin.

Mrs. O'Donagough looked at her again, as she thus stood with her head uncovered, and

something very nearly approaching to a frown, contracted her brow. She said not a word more about her departed sister, or the beauty of her smiles; but after a disagreeable sort of struggle with her own judgment, she inwardly ejaculated, "If that girl was *my* daughter, I should make something of her."

The military eye of General Hubert had not deceived him. There was but little difference in the height of the young ladies, but that little was decidedly in favour of Miss Hubert.

"You see I am right, ladies," said he; "I have been used to measuring recruits by my eye."

"Am I *shortest*, mama?" said Patty, in a tone that expressed both vexation and incredulity.

"Why, yes you are, my dear," replied her mother; "I am sure I don't know how it can be—you look so very much bigger and older."

"Oh! what a maypole I must be!" said the still blushing Elizabeth, replacing her bonnet, and thereby eclipsing one, of certainly the least *ordinary* faces that ever was looked upon. The rounded contour of the oval, indeed, that might

be hoped for hereafter, was not yet there; and, excepting when excited, the delicate cheek was pale. But the forehead, eyes, nose, and beyond all else, the finely-cut full lips, with that rare Grecian wavy line, which gives a power of expression possessed by few, were all pre-eminently handsome; and had it not been for the conviction that her niece Agnes never did, nor never would know how to make the most of beauty, the last state of Mrs. O'Donagough's mind, respecting the parallel inevitably drawn between their two daughters, would have been considerably worse than the first. As it was, however, when Elizabeth again sat down with her close bonnet, and her quiet look of perfect childishness,—while Martha, after a momentary arrangement of her curls before the glass, turned round upon her with a throat as white as ivory, cheeks like a cabbage rose, and eyes that darted liquid beams of youthful sauciness, with all the airs and graces of conscious beauty,—it was utterly impossible she should feel otherwise than well contented with her.

The visit lasted about twenty minutes longer,

which, to say the truth, seemed quite long enough to all parties; yet, when Mrs. Hubert rose to take leave, her fond aunt was almost clamorous that she should stay a little longer.

"Oh, dearest Agnes! must I lose you already! Think what a time it is since last we met! It is *such* a treat to see you:" *et cetera, et cetera.*

"We shall have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow, aunt," replied Agnes, kindly, "and of course my cousin will come with you; unless, indeed, she would like to come earlier," she added, recollecting herself, "and share Elizabeth's two o'clock dinner? Perhaps this would be the best way, as it would enable them to take a walk by the sea together, afterwards."

The operations of thought are proverbially rapid with us all; but Mrs. O'Donagough was a particularly quick person, and even before her niece had ceased to speak, the pros and cons for this nursery sort of invitation to Martha had passed through her mind. But, notwithstanding all this quickness, it was really

not a very easy matter to decide. She was perfectly aware that it would make her daughter, what the young lady herself called "as mad as fire;" but on the other hand, it would probably lead to much greater intimacy. Against it was the obvious fact, that the beautiful dress projected, and already prepared for the occasion, could not possibly be worn; but then, all the people in Brighton, would have an opportunity of seeing the young people together on the beach, exactly as if they were one family.

In this dilemma, Mrs. O'Donagough wisely took the course which could most easily admit of retreat; and with a countenance beaming with affection and pleasure replied, "There is nothing in the world she would like so well, my dear Agnes! At what time shall she be with you?"

"A little before two if you please." And then the final adieus were exchanged, and the visitors departed.

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## CHAPTER XII.

JUDGMENTS FORMED, AND SENTIMENTS GENERATED—AN ANIMATED DISCUSSION—FOLLOWED BY A REASONABLE RESULT—SOME FOLKS WISER IN THEIR GENERATION THAN OTHER FOLKS—THE COUSINS—"A DELIGHTFUL DAY"—AND ITS CONCLUSION.

THE O'Donagough family remained perfectly silent till the door of the house was distinctly heard to close after their departing guests; and even then, Mr. O'Donagough, who had stepped to the window, and so placed his eyes as to obtain a sidelong glance after them, continued to hold his finger to his nose, in token that no word was to be spoken till they had passed beyond the possibility of hearing it.

Perhaps this extreme caution arose from a sort of prophetic consciousness on the part of Mr. O'Donagough, that when his daughter did

speak, it was likely to be with considerable energy. Nor, if this were the case, did he at all miscalculate. No sooner did his finger quit his nose, and his eyes direct themselves into the room, instead of out of it, than his wife and daughter both

Cried "Havock!" and let slip the dogs of war!

In plain prose, they both burst forth into the most vehement and unsparing abuse of Miss Hubert's dress, manner, and general appearance.

"Isn't it a most extraordinary and unaccountable thing," exclaimed Mrs. O'Donagough, "that such a really elegant-looking woman as my niece Agnes, should choose to let her daughter go such a fright? Did any one ever see such an object? It is a perfect mystery to me; and that is the truth."

"And pray how is she to help it?" replied Patty. "Her mother did not make her, I suppose?"

"If she did not make her, she made her bonnet," rejoined her mother, "or at any rate she made her put it on; and I am sure that if

it had been an old extinguisher it could not have answered better for turning her into an object and a fright."

"Lor! mama! what does the bonnet signify? It only looks as if they hadn't a penny in the world. But you won't pretend to tell me that if that lanky monster of a girl was to have as beautiful a bonnet as my pink one on, it would make her look like anything else but what she is? and that's as ugly as sin, and you know it."

"Well, Patty," said her father, "and if she is, it's all the better for you, my dear; so I don't see why you should look so put out about it. If what your mother says is to come true, and you are to be taken to court and everywhere along with her, it is a great deal better that you should outdo her, than that she should outdo you."

These judicious remarks considerably softened the aspect of Miss O'Donagough. She no longer looked like a hedgehog in an attitude of declared hostility to all comers, nay she almost smiled as she replied,

"Lor a-mercy, papa! you don't think I'm going to cry because my cousin isn't a beauty, do you?"

"I am sure I can't say what may happen about the taking Patty to court, Mr. O'Donagough," observed Mrs. O'Donagough, with rather an anxious look. "That, you know, must depend altogether on the degree of intimacy that grows between us, and of course it will depend in a very great measure upon Patty herself."

"Oh, my gracious!" cried the young lady, "I am sure I shan't do anything to get intimate with that scaramouch of a girl, so you need not reckon upon it,—mind that. I'd see the queen, and the king too, if there was one, and all the princes and princesses upon the face of the earth, at the bottom of the Red Sea before I'd demean myself to lick the feet of such a nasty, vulgar, ugly, beast of a girl as that."

"Now, Patty, I think you go rather too far," said her father; "Not that I want you to lick anybody's feet—that's not the best way to get

on in the world. But though your cousin is not to be compared with you, as a fine handsome bouncing girl of her age, I don't think she is too ugly to speak to, either. Do you know, I should not wonder if some people were to think her quite pretty."

The quills rose again in the eyes, and on the lips, of the susceptible Patty. "How can you stand there talking such nonsense, papa," said she sharply, "as if I cared whether she was pretty or ugly. But when mama talks of our getting intimate with her, or of our ever being such friends as Betty Sheepshanks and I was, it is altogether provoking, and I would advise you both to give up the notion at once; for it never will, and it never shall be. Nasty, stiff, great baby!"

"I tell you what, Patty," said Mrs. O'Donagough stoutly, though secretly trembling at the reception her unpalatable invitation to the nursery dinner was likely to receive, "I tell you what, miss, if you choose to set up your back at my relations in this way, I'll never try to make one of them take notice of you, and I

should like to see where you would be then, and what good all the nice clothes I have been getting together would prove, without a single soul to look at them? Don't keep knitting your brows that way, Patty. You don't look much handsomer than your cousin now, I can tell you. I only wish you could see yourself!"

"Well, ma'am, I can see myself easy enough, if that's all," replied Miss Patty, turning to the looking-glass, arranging her hair, and then flashing round again upon her admiring mother; "I am not at all ashamed to look at my own face."

"It would be rather odd if you were, Patty; I won't deny that," said Mrs. O'Donagough, smiling with a look of very undisguised admiration. "But that's neither here nor there, my dear, we won't talk of your beauty before your face, because that's very bad manners; and into the bargain it is a great deal more to the purpose to determine what it will be the best to do about the time of your going to-morrow, my dear. My niece Agnes, who, I

must say, seems inclined to do everything in her power to make you and Elizabeth as intimate as possible, has desired, as the greatest favour in the world, that you would spend the whole day with her; that is to say, go quite early, Patty, and not ceremoniously like your papa and me, you know, at six o'clock, but between one and two, that you may take a long chatty ramble with her by the sea-side, after an early dinner. I hope you will like that, my dear? I am sure it is paying you a monstrous compliment."

"Like it!" replied Patty, raising her voice to a very shrill tone, "*I* like playing at being a baby all day long, with that stupid oaf of a girl! I can't and I won't, and that's flat."

"Nonsense, Patty," said Mr. O'Donagough, "*that's* not the way to get on, I promise you. I won't have you quarrel with your bread and butter in that style. Go? To be sure you willl and be thankful too, if you know what's what."

"And pray what am I to do about my beautiful striped gauze dress, and my blue satin

shoes? Am I to walk out with Miss Gawky in that fashion?"

"No, my dear, that is quite impossible. No, you cannot go full dressed, as we intended, that is entirely out of the question, for this time," said her mother; "you must just wear your new *mousseline de laine*, Patty. It is an elegant thing, and yet quite good style for a morning. And your pink bonnet, you know, and the scarf; so that you will be perfectly first-rate in appearance, and enjoy, besides, the enormous advantage of letting everybody in Brighton see that you are considered as one of the Hubert family."

"I wish, with all my soul," cried Patty, "that every one of the Hubert family had been packed off to Botany Bay the day we left it! I see as plain as daylight that you and papa both mean to lead me the life of a dog about 'em. You will make me run away if you do, I'll tell you that, for I know I can't bear it."

"Don't put yourself in such a fuss, Patty, for heaven's sake!" said her mother, but more

coaxingly than scoldingly; for she still stood in very considerable dread of a final and positive refusal. "Think, my dear girl, before you say so, of the beautiful fine parties, and the beaux, and the dances you'll be sure to come in for in Berkeley-square, if you do but play your cards well now. Think of all this, Patty, and do your very best to get thick with Elizabeth Hubert."

"Patty, your mother's right this time," said Mr. O'Donagough, "so go at the time fixed, and say no more about it. I'll take you into a box at the playhouse the night after, if you'll be a good girl."

Miss O'Donagough had a phrase which will explain these words produced upon her, namely,—

"When papa's in earnest he *is* in earnest." The promised play, too, undoubtedly helped her decision; and altogether she was induced, after distorting her much-admired beauty by more than one grimace, to reply, "Well, if I must, I must; but it is as bad as being whipped, I can tell you that."

The subject was then judiciously permitted to drop, and the far future of next winter in London, with all the joys it *might* bring, took its place; effectually arming the mind of Patty for the endurance of whatever present annoyance might arise, which, acting like Catholic penances, should lead to such a paradise!

Meanwhile General Hubert, his lady and daughter, pursued their way homeward. It was, probably, not altogether from lack of a subject that they walked on so silently; but instead of words, Mrs. Hubert only pressed her husband's arm, to which he replied by somewhat of a more caressing pressure in return, and the quietly-smiling pronunciation of the word "Well?" Neither did their daughter say much, continuing to hold her mother's hand in silence till the door-bell of their own mansion had been rung; and then smiling a little, and colouring a good deal, she said, "Is not my cousin older than I am, mama?"

"She looks a vast deal older, certainly," was the reply.

"Do you think she will like to play at looking for shells among the shingles, with Emily and me?"

"Perhaps not, my dear. You must endeavour to entertain her by rational conversation," said Mrs. Hubert, entering the house, and not sorry, perhaps, to interrupt the discussion, by desiring her daughter immediately to get ready for the dinner, which was waiting for her. It was *tête-à-tête*, therefore, that General Hubert and his wife entered the drawing-room, and there was something whimsical enough in the manner in which their eyes encountered after silently seating themselves in two arm-chairs, which faced each other.

Agnes pursed up her beautiful mouth, and endeavoured to look grave; but the moment her eyes met those of her husband, they both laughed. This movement of the muscles, however, was quite involuntary on the part of the lady, and speedily mastering it, she said, "Pray don't, General Hubert, pray don't laugh at it! What *can* we do?"

"I cannot choose but laugh, Agnes," replied

her husband, "if you look so comically dismayed. And after all, my dear, I cannot say that we have seen any thing that ought greatly to surprise us. Your aunt Barnaby is as little altered as it is possible she could be in the time, I think. Of Mr. O'Donagough I have no remembrance, but he appears to me quite as well-looking and respectable a personage as we could reasonably hope for. Rather evangelical, I suspect; but under the circumstances I see no reason to object to this. And as for their daughter, I cannot but think that she is as precisely what Mrs. Barnaby's daughter might be expected to be, as it is possible to imagine. Wherefore, dear wife, look not so despondingly, but thank the gods that matters are no worse."

All this was said lightly and gaily, but Mrs. Hubert seemed to have lost all inclination to laugh.

"I would not be ungrateful to the gods, Montague," said she, "but I must own I feel the arrival of the O'Donagoughs to be a very great misfortune."

"No, no, not so," returned her husband; "not a very great misfortune, Agnes. You must not class it so. Aunt Betsy will be a little outrageous, perhaps, but we must contrive to soothe her; and for the rest, be quite sure that a little good management to prevent our meeting often, and a little quiet patient civility when we do meet, will suffice to prevent any very serious annoyance."

"But our girl, Hubert? You take the thing so admirably *en philosophe*, that I will cease to torment myself about you. But is it not grievous that Elizabeth should—"

"Find a cousin more bright and blooming than herself? We must bear this, Agnes," said the General; "but this is all. Miss O'Donagough will do Elizabeth no harm, you may depend upon it."

Soothed, if not satisfied, Mrs. Hubert indulged in no more repinings for the present; and feeling something like self-reproach at having experienced so much more vehement a distaste for her relations than her noble husband appeared to do, she determined as far as

possible to conquer, or at any rate to conceal it. To Elizabeth she said little more on the subject; but to Miss Wilmot, the daughter of her own early friend and instructress, she ventured to speak with entire freedom. The peculiarities of her "Aunt Barnaby," were already perfectly well known to this lady; and, therefore, without scruple of any kind, she ventured to confess to her, that although she wished every possible attention and kindness to be shown to Miss O'Donagough, she did not wish the intercourse between the young ladies to grow into intimacy.

"Elizabeth is so childish, Miss Wilmot,' continued Mrs. Hubert, "that though I do not greatly fear her catching the singular manners of this poor girl, I think she may not be capable of — of disliking them, I believe is the only honest word, as much as I wish her to do."

"Not having yet seen the young lady," replied Miss Wilmot, smiling, "I can give no opinion upon this—but—if Miss O'Donagough be like what Mrs. Compton describes her

mother to have been, Elizabeth will not like her too well."

Very punctually at two o'clock Mr. O'Donagough himself conducted his young daughter to the door of General Hubert, and there took leave of her till the evening—his parting words being, "Now Patty, mind your p's and q's. I know your mother often plagues you with a monstrous deal of preaching about one thing and another, and you know I never scold you for laughing at it. But she's right this time about making the very best of yourself with those stiff disagreeable people—mind that, Patty."

"Don't you trouble yourself about my turning 'em all to good account, if any thing's to be got out of 'em," replied the young lady, with an expressive wink of the left eye; "and if I mind my hits that way, I expect you'll let me hate 'em as much as I please. That is fair, isn't it?"

The house-door opened as she finished the sentence, and her father departed, replying to it only by an acquiescent nod.

Miss O'Donagough was immediately ushered into the back-parlour, where the table was already spread for dinner, and her two cousins seated on either side of their governess, who was reading to them Miss Edgeworth's tale of the Prussian Vase. All three rose to receive her. The little Emily, as well as Miss Wilmot was properly introduced by Elizabeth, and the necessary quantity of hand-shaking performed, while Miss Wilmot, laying aside the splendid pink bonnet and scarf of the gaily-dressed visiter, smiled furtively aside, as she remembered Mrs. Hubert's anxiety, lest her pupil should be incapable of judging fitly of the peculiar graces she displayed.

There was, however, in Elizabeth's behaviour to her cousin, no symptom of her having as yet formed any judgment of her at all, for her manner spoke only the most perfect good-humour and civility, a little blended with embarrassment.

"Do you like the sea, cousin Martha?" was the first attempt at the "rational conversation" her mother had recommended.

"What, sailing upon it?" rejoined Miss Martha.

"No, I meant walking near it, and looking at it," replied Elizabeth. "But I should like you to tell me all about sailing too. You have sailed a great way, have you not? And I have never been on the sea at all, except between Dover and Calais; and even that, you know, is not sailing. Did you like your voyage?"

"Like it! yes, to be sure I did. It's monstrous good fun!"

"I think I should like it too," said Elizabeth. "I never see any large ship passing up and down the channel, without wishing to be aboard her."

"I don't know about *your* liking it," replied Miss Martha. "I think you seem too young to take such pleasure in it as I did. And besides, I don't believe—There's no fun I mean on board ship—at least I should think so—unless people are nearly grown up. I don't think children would be taken so much notice of."

"Do you think so?" said Elizabeth, innocently. "I should fancy children might be

very well amused. Don't you think, Emily, that you should like to run up and down the deck of a great large ship?"

"Yes, I should," said the little one, stoutly; "and I should not care if anybody noticed me or not."

"I suppose not, indeed, you little thing!" said Martha, laughing.

"Did the sea disagree with you at all, Miss O'Donagough?" inquired Miss Wilmot.

"Oh, lor, yes; I was as sick as a cat for the first week!" replied the young lady. "You never saw anything like it in your life. No sooner did I swallow anything—You understand? (with an appropriate grimace.) But I had a good friend on board who took capital care of me, and always showed me which side of the ship to walk, and helped me up and down, and all that sort of thing you know; and so by degrees it went off, and then I was as jolly as a tinker, and such an appetite! Oh, my! How I did eat! And then we got to famous fun with ship-billiards; and all the rest of the time, till we got to Sheerness, I liked it better than anything else in the whole world."

"And after Sheerness, I suppose you felt impatient to get to land?" said Elizabeth.

"Yes, I did," succinctly replied Miss O'Donagough.

"I do not wonder at that. I think you must have been so impatient to see England!"

"Oh no, not I! I did not care a straw about England just then. But we lost one of our best friends at Sheerness, and that spoilt everything."

"Had you many passengers on board?"

"I am sure I hardly know anything about 'em. They were all nasty people."

"All nasty people!" exclaimed little Emily.

"Yes, little one—all nasty people;" replied Martha, laughing. "I suppose she thinks I mean all dirty people. What a funny little soul! When you are as old as me, Miss Emmy, you'll know what ladies mean, when they call people nasty. We don't mean dirty clothes, nor dirty faces neither; but just everybody we don't like."

"If you don't like me, will you say I am nasty?" demanded the little girl, looking at her rather reproachfully.

"To be sure I shall; but I won't dislike

you if you'll give me a kiss, for I think you are very pretty."

"But if I was not very pretty, should you call me nasty?" persisted the child.

"Yes, I dare say I should; for I hate everybody that is not pretty," replied Martha; at the same time making one of her father's peculiar grimaces in such a manner, as to indicate that Miss Wilmot was in her thoughts. Without making any reply respecting the offered salute, the little Emily turned towards the governess, and after leaning against her knee for a minute or two, took an opportunity when she bent her head, of putting her arms round her neck, and giving her a kiss.

"Well now! if she isn't kept in good order, I'll wonder," said Martha chuckling. "She knows what a whipping is, or I'm much mistaken." This was addressed in rather a low confidential voice to Elizabeth; but before she could reply to it, the door opened, and the dinner entered.

"That's no bad sight, early as it is for dining. I am as hungry as a horse, Miss Elizabeth. Where am I to sit? What, here!—next to the

old lady? Let me sit at the bottom and carve, shall I? You shall see if I don't do it fit to be a married woman. La! what a nice dinner! What a pity it is we have got no beaux!"

No opposition being made to Miss O'Donagough's placing herself at the bottom of the table, she sat down, and began vigorously to attack a leg of lamb, intended as the *pièce de résistance* of the entertainment.

"Will you not take some fish, Miss O'Donagough?" demanded Miss Wilmot.

"Yes, if there is butter and sauce with it," replied Martha; "but some of you must have mutton, 'cause I've cut this piece off. Here, little one, you shall have it."

Emily looked into the face of her governess, but said nothing.

"Send it to me, my dear, if you please," said Miss Wilmot; "but do not cut any more yet. The young ladies both take fish." The dinner, sauce and all being greatly to Miss O'Donagough's satisfaction, her spirits rose as it proceeded, and she went on in a sort of *crescendo* movement, eating and talking, till she had got into the highest possible good humour.

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*Miss Patty makes herself quite at home at the Generals.*

"Well, after all, I think we shall be monstrous good friends, Elizabeth?" said she, putting a third glass of custard into her plate; "and I don't know but what it may be better fun dining in this way, and eating as much as I like, than if I *had* come in my gauze frock, and sat up doing grand with the old fogrums in the dining-room. I do hate old people like poison —don't you?"

To this appeal, Elizabeth answered nothing; but almost involuntarily gave such a look to her governess, as friends are apt to exchange when something striking occurs, upon which, for the moment, they can make no other commentary. Martha saw this look, and interpreting it her own way, shook her curls, gave a slight laugh, and said no more, persuaded that her cousin had intended to caution her against being too open-hearted in the presence of that first and foremost of fogrums, her governess.

But although this persuasion silenced her for the moment, it rather added to her good humour: and, on setting out for the promised walk by the sea-side, she took the arm of Miss

Hubert with very cousinly familiarity, and drew her forward with a rapid step, in the hope of outwalking the governess and Emily, and thereby ensuring "a little fun," and a great deal of confidential communication.

Miss Wilmot, who knew her pupil well, and feared not any injury to her from the association beyond its present annoyance, made no effort to overtake them; and contented herself by answering as sedately and discreetly as she could, the speculations of the little Emily on their guest, which partook largely of that peculiar vein of observation in which children sometimes remark on what appears ridiculous to them, with a freshness and keenness of quizzing that might be sought for in vain, in the sallies of the most practised proficients in the art.

On reaching the steps in the cliff, Miss O'Donagough had the extreme delight of perceiving that two gay-looking youths in regimentals, had just descended them, and were walking slowly onward the way they were about to go.

"Make haste, Elizabeth, ain't we lucky?" she exclaimed, on perceiving them, and setting

the example of the speed she recommended, she placed her hand on the rail and ran down with extraordinary rapidity to the bottom of the flight. Though the light movements of her young companion hardly permitted her being very slow, Martha chid her delay, and ere she had fairly reached the last step, seized on her arm, and by a vigorous pull, obliged her to clear it by a jump.

"What a slow fool you are, Elizabeth!" she exclaimed, again taking her arm, and drawing her rapidly forward; "let us pass them directly, and I'll bet a guinea that before we have made five steps, they will pass us."

"Why do you wish them to pass us, Martha?" said her companion with perfect simplicity.

Miss O'Donagough looked back, thinking from these words that the governess must be within hearing; but, on the contrary, perceiving that she had stopped to fasten Emily's shoe, she began laughing in a tone so loud, that the young men both turned round to reconnoitre.

The moment their eyes fell upon the young

ladies, they stepped aside, and permitted them to pass, raising their hats at the same time in salutation. Miss Hubert bowed, and walked on.

"Well done you, Elizabeth!" said her companion, strongly compressing her arm, and tittering very audibly. "How beautiful they look! don't they? But they are only ensigns, both of them, I can tell you that. I wish to goodness I knew their names."

"Do not speak so loud, cousin Martha, or they will hear you," said Elizabeth, innocently. "It is Lord William Southwood and Mr. Templeton."

"A lord!" cried the startled Martha, instantly turning round her head to look at them. "You don't say so? And he bowing to us so politely! Don't you think we had better sit down upon that stone? They must pass by it, you see, 'cause of the water coming in so. Isn't this capital fun?"

Miss Hubert was by no means a stupid girl, but she no more comprehended her cousin's exclamations, than if they had been uttered in Hebrew, and replied very simply, "No, don't sit there, Martha, there is a much better place

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*Miss Pattie's first sight of a live Lord.*

a little farther on, where Miss Wilmot almost always lets us sit down, and if you *did* like looking for shells, you would find plenty there, such as they are."

"Looking for shells!" exclaimed Martha, bursting into loud laughter. "Oh, my! what a fool you are! or is it only put on, Elizabeth? That's it, I see through it, I'll be hanged if I don't. You are a deep one, with your bowings, and knowing so well what their names are, and all."

"What *do* you mean, cousin Martha? How can I help knowing the names of those two gentlemen, if it is of them you are speaking?" replied Miss Hubert. "They both dined at our house yesterday."

"Gracious goodness! Is that true, Elizabeth? Dined at your house?—and one of them a lord! Will they come there again to-day?"

"I do not know," replied Elizabeth, laughing in her turn; "but I am afraid not,—they do not come every day."

"Why didn't you speak to them, you stupid girl, if you know them so well?" demanded Martha, reproachfully.

"I don't know them well," replied her cousin; "I never see them, except for a very little while after dinner in the drawing-room."

"Have they been there more than once?" inquired Martha.

"Yes, several times, I think—at least Lord William has. I don't remember seeing the other so often."

"Oh! how I wish?—I do think it was very—" But both sentences, warmly as they flowed from her heart, were cut short ere completed by the prudent Martha, who at that moment recalled her mother's words concerning the importance of an intimate intercourse with the Hubert family. Never did the admonition of a parent come more forcibly upon the heart of a child.

"I must keep in with 'em, if I die for it!" was the mental exclamation which followed the remembrance of this maternal warning; and, perceiving, on once more turning round her head, that the officers had changed the direction of their walk, she again took the arm of her cousin, who had quitted her side for a moment to examine a choice morsel of sea-weed, and

began a direct and deliberate attack upon her affections, by praising her eyes, and the handkerchief that was tied round her neck; hinting, that she thought her mama kept her a great deal too back, and that her governess was already afraid of her; concluding with an assurance that she never liked any girl so well before in all her life, and that she hoped to her heart they should be very *very* intimate, and stick together like very near relations, as they really were.

To all this, Elizabeth answered gently and civilly, but reached home at last with a feeling of self-reproach for being so very tired of her cousin's company.

Their tea-table awaited their return, and, notwithstanding the sublime speculations for the future, which filled the heart and head of Miss O'Donagough, the cherries and the cakes spread before her were sufficiently attractive to keep her tranquilly in the school-room, till the ladies had left the dinner-parlour.

"Now we will go up stairs, and see your mama, shall we?" said Miss Hubert.

"Oh, yes! if you will—I'm quite ready when I've done eating this one queen-cake

more. And you really don't know if there's any officers or not dining here?" replied her cousin.

"No, indeed I do not," was the unsatisfactory reply.

It is very probable that neither the aunt nor the niece were very sorry to have their *tête-à-tête* interrupted by the entrance of Miss Wilmot and the young ladies. Mrs. O'Donagough had already obtained all particulars respecting the present residence and manner of life of her "dear brother-in-law," Mr. Willoughby, and of the number of grandchildren bestowed upon him by his daughter Nora—had expressed the most "heartfelt delight," at hearing that she would be sure to see them all during the ensuing season in London, and was by that time quite ready to scrutinize the countenance of her daughter, in order to ascertain how the *long day* had answered.

Great was the contentment which attended this examination of a countenance exceedingly capable of showing whether its owner were pleased or the contrary. It was immediately evident to Mrs. O'Donagough that her daughter was in one of her most amiable moods; and

though there had been no party at dinner, and consequently but little opportunity of displaying the studied elegance of her own appearance, still "the style of everything about her *darling Agnes*," was such as to make her feel more sensibly than ever the immense importance of being united to her by the tenderest ties of affection. It could not, therefore, fail of being very delightful to her to perceive that Martha, whom, as she had told her husband, "she greatly feared she should find in the dumps," was radiant in smiles and good-humour, and apparently on the best possible terms with that "stupid shy-looking thing," her cousin.

Not only, indeed, had the dinner, the servants, and the plate of her beloved Agnes, excited all the warm affections of Mrs. O'Donagough's heart, but the observations she had made on her husband during the repast, tended to convince her very forcibly, that he, too, cautiously as he had hitherto expressed his feelings on the subject, attached great importance to the connection. Never had she before seen him as he appeared to her on this important day. Quiet, reserved, respectful,

rather religious in his language, but with amiable humility abstaining from giving too serious a tone to the conversation, his wife gazed and listened with equal admiration and astonishment, while he developed a degree of talent, for which she, even in her fondest days, had never given him credit.

"It shall not be my fault," said she internally, "if he is not rewarded for all this cleverness. He knows what he is about as well as most men, and he shan't be stopped for want of a helping hand from me."

Accordingly Mrs. O'Donagough was enchanted, beyond the power of language to express, with her "little great-niece Emily," declared Elizabeth "by far the loveliest creature she had ever seen," and was obliged to pull out her pocket-handkerchief when speaking of their dear grandmother, and the astonishing likeness which they both bore her.

Mrs. Hubert listened to it all with great sweetness, but suffered no great time to elapse between the coffee and the tea, and hinted to Miss Wilmot that she did not wish Emily to be kept up beyond her usual hour.

Very soon after her departure, Mr. O'Donagough broke off his mild discussion with the General on the importance of enforcing a pure morality throughout the army, and rising said,

"I am afraid it is getting very late, my dear; you know my habits, and must not suffer even the happiness of this blessed re-union to interfere with what we know to be our duty."

On this Mrs. O'Donagough rose too, with a look of meekness that really seemed quite angelic, saying, "Oh! no—not for the world!" and, as if moved by the most perfect family sympathy, Martha slapped-to the volume of engravings she was examining at the same moment, so that the leave-taking was sudden and prompt, and in less than two minutes after it began, the Allen O'Donagough family found themselves enjoying the sea-breeze on the broad flag-stones of the Marine Parade.

"Thank God, that's over!" cried Mr. Allen O'Donagough, as soon as they had fairly cleared the premises.

"*I* shall not be sorry to get home and have a draught of porter, it has been so dreadfully hot all day," observed his lady. "But to

be sure, nothing *could* be kinder or more flattering!"

"Oh, lor! I am as tired as a dog," exclaimed Martha, stretching out her arms, and yawning vehemently; "but I don't care a straw—I know what I know about the people that visit there, and I'll be hanged if I don't take care to be one of them."

"You are your father's own child, Patty!" said Mr. O'Donagough, recovering his usual tone; "we shall make something of 'em between us."

"Well! to be sure it is a pleasure to introduce you both to my relations! and depend upon it, you will never repent being civil to them," said his wife, with rather a mysterious nodding of the head, made visible as they reached their own door, by the light of the lamp that hung over it.

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